

## Ankara, Tehran agree to cooperate on border security

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey and Iran agreed Wednesday to cooperate on border security during a visit here by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Eminzad, the Anatolia news agency reported. A direct telephone link will be installed between the armies on both sides of their shared border to enable "effective" cooperation between the two countries, the agency said. A meeting will take place next week to determine who will be responsible for the line on each side and to make the line operational. Ankara has frequently criticised Iran for "closing its eyes" to border infiltration by rebels from the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), a charge which Tehran has denied.

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## Iraq disarms British-U.S. bombs

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi weapons experts disarmed 10 missiles and two one-tonne bombs dropped by British and U.S. warplanes in the Zi Qar province of southern Iraq, the official news agency INA reported Wednesday. "Planes from the U.S.-British aggression attacked oil installations in Nasiriyah in the Zi Qar province," INA said without specifying the date of the attack. It said the two bombs were U.S.-made but did not give further details. British planes fired on Iraq on Tuesday for the second time in four days and a defense ministry spokesman in London on Wednesday warned there had been an escalating number of incidents between Iraq and U.S.-British warplanes patrolling no-fly zones above the north and south of the country.

### Chechen president introduces Islamic law

MOSCOW (AP) — Meeting a key demand of his opponents, Chechnya's president on Wednesday ordered the establishment of Islamic law in the breakaway republic, sharply curtailing parliament's powers and ordering that an Islamic constitution be written. President Aslan Maskhadov signed several decrees Wednesday, ordering the establishment of "full-scale" Islamic law, effective immediately, Russian news agencies reported. Maskhadov revoked parliament's legislative functions and ordered the body to cooperate with Muslim leaders to write an Islamic constitution within three months.

### Turkish court files case against Kurd party

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkey's constitutional court on Wednesday opened a case to outlaw the country's main Kurdish party for alleged links to Abdulhak Ocalan's guerrilla group, Anatolia news agency said. The charges were brought by hardline Chief Prosecutor Vural Savas who accused the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) of recruiting guerrillas for the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has fought a 14-year armed campaign for Kurdish self-rule. HADEP advocates a peaceful resolution to the conflict which has cost more than 29,000 lives.

### U.S. judge denies new hearing for death row inmate

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A U.S. federal judge rejected Wednesday a request for a new clemency hearing for a death row inmate on the eve of the man's scheduled execution for three killings committed when he was 16 years old. Sean Sellers, 29, was scheduled to die by lethal injection early Thursday at the southern U.S. Oklahoma State Penitentiary for the shooting deaths of his mother, stepfather and a convenience store clerk in Oklahoma City.

### 'As many 4,000 U.S. troops may go to Kosovo'

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States may contribute as many as 4,000 troops to a NATO ground force in Kosovo if the warring sides reach a peace settlement, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said Wednesday. Army General Henry Shelton said the size of the force will depend on what kind of peace agreement is reached between Belgrade and the KLA, but he said the U.S. goal was to have the Europeans provide most troops. Shelton said no exit date should be set going into a deployment in Kosovo, as the administration initially did in Bosnia, raising the prospects for a long-term commitment of U.S. forces in the southern Serbian province.

### 8 killed in Indian tribal violence

NEW DELHI (AP) — Outlawed tribal guerrillas clashed with rival groups in northeastern India and set fire to huts Wednesday, leaving eight people dead and flames raging through villages, domestic news agencies reported. Nearly 25 armed members of the National Liberation Front of Tripura swooped on a village in the Tripura state late on Tuesday killing four people and wounding two others. Press Trust of India reported. The killings came in a series of sporadic flare-ups of violence between tribal and non-tribal groups in the thickly forested

### interrogation

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament on Wednesday voted in favour of "partially" lifting the immunity of Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi to allow security authorities to interrogate him on rape charges, the first such decision in the history of Parliament.

The move, approved by 42 out of 64 lawmakers present during the discussion, allows the public prosecutor to interrogate Abbadi but denies him the right to detain the deputy or remand him to court.

It followed a recommendation by the House Legal Committee proposing a partial lifting of immunity.

Two sisters, aged 14 and 20, pressed charges in November against Abbadi claiming that he had raped them.

The public prosecutor wrote to Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh demanding that the 80-member Lower House lift the deputy's immunity to allow for his trial.

"It is a set-up case by certain people whom I know very well and whose identities I will reveal," Abbadi, known for his controversial

### Arafat, Albright hold talks on 'revolving door' for prisoners

WASHINGTON (AP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat affirmed Wednesday his intention of carrying out the stalled West Bank accords with Israel.

"I am insistent on following up the peace process," Arafat told reporters after a 40-minute meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The process is stalled, with Israel refusing to yield more land until the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) imposes tougher restraints on "terrorism" and prosecutes suspects.

On another touchy subject, he said Palestinian leaders were grappling with the question of a Palestinian state. "This can't be mentioned now," Arafat said.

The Palestinian leader got a boost before arriving, though, when the State Department announced it had no evidence to support Israeli accusations that suspects in attacks on Americans had been set free.

"Those charges, so far as we can tell, are simply not proven by any evidence," State Department spokesman James Rubin said Tuesday.

Concerns about whether "terrorist" suspects are treated leniently by Palestinian authorities also were raised by Albright at her meeting with Arafat, Rubin said.

They also surveyed the stalled West Bank process and agreed to hold a meeting in mid-February of a joint U.S.-Palestinian commission to develop trade, scientific and cultural ties, Rubin said.

While Rubin disputed Israel's assertion, he said

"with respect to other related issues of larger numbers of people in the revolving door, let me say that we do have concerns."

The "revolving door" is a reference to Israeli claims that suspects are detained and then quietly let go.

Another touchy issue is Arafat's periodic declarations that the Palestinians will establish a state whatever the outcome of negotiations with Israel.

Senator Sam Brownback said he would introduce a resolution opposing the unilateral declaration of a state. It would violate Palestinian-Israeli understandings "and the United States should not recognise any such declaration," Brownback said.

Arafat was meeting with Albright and members of Congress Wednesday, and hoped to have a few minutes with President Bill Clinton at a prayer breakfast Thursday.

His participation has sparked complaints by some Christian fundamentalists.

Randy Tate, executive director of the Christian Coalition, said he would boycott the breakfast. To attend, Tate said, "would provide legitimacy to an unrepentant terrorist who has the blood of thousands on his hands."

Similarly, Thad Pinney, communications director for the Traditional Values Coalition, which represents 40,000 churches, said: "We are encouraging congressmen to boycott the breakfast because Arafat is an unrepentant terrorist."

(Continued on page 7)

### U.N. General Assembly to meet on Israel settlements

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. General Assembly is to meet in emergency session Friday to vote on a new condemnation of Israel's settlement policy and prospects for a U.N. conference.

U.N. General Assembly spokeswoman Jadranka Mihalic told AFP that the emergency special session would be held at the request of Jordan, on behalf of Arab states, and South Africa for the non-aligned.

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reduced to 40 years. That's a discriminatory approach."

Abraham Abu Dakka, whose son was killed by Popper, said the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) should seek his extradition.

"The very idea of reducing the sentence of those killers is an ugly crime. It is an affront to those who were martyred," Abu Dakka, 65, told Reuters.

The partial pardons were requested by Justice Minister Tsahi Hanegbi and came just three months before general elections in which Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party is seeking to rally support of the Israeli far-right.

Weizman's order reduced by four years the 15-year sentence of Yoram Skolnik, who was jailed in 1993 for shooting a bound Palestinian man who had been captured after stabbing a Jewish settler in the West Bank.

Skolnik was originally jailed for life but Weizman already commuted the sentence to 15 years.

Nechemia Michbabi, who killed a Palestinian man by throwing a hand grenade into a market in the Old City of

Arab east Jerusalem in 1992, had his term reduced from 12 years to 10 years.

Also benefiting from Wednesday's decision were two brothers, Yehodav and Eitan Kahalani, who were sentenced to 12 years in prison for the attempted murder of a Palestinian and had their terms cut to eight years.

In justifying his request for the presidential pardons, Hanegbi said that in recent years "thousands of Palestinian prisoners convicted of anti-Israeli attacks had been released."

"That's why I felt it justified to recommend the reduction of prison sentences of Jews condemned for anti-Arab attacks," he said, adding that all the Israeli prisoners had "expressed regret" for their actions.

"What the government and the justice minister did here was set one principle for Jewish murderers and another for Arab murderers. This is unacceptable," said Israeli legislator Yossi Sarid of the leftist Meretz Party.

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### 'Smooth' change of succession underlines strength of country's institutions, analysts say

#### By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As HRH Crown Prince Abdullah, the Regent, moved to assume his new responsibilities as second in line to the Throne, Jordanians anxiously await good news of His Majesty King Hussein's health.

The Monarch, the region's longest-serving ruler, will remain under close monitoring for the next two weeks after Tuesday's bone marrow transplant, but officials said first indications were positive. "We are praying to God to save His Majesty... and to end the state of anxiety and confusion gripping

us since he returned to the U.S. for renewed treatment," wrote Sultan Hanabat in the mass-circulation daily Al Ra'i.

The King was rushed back to the Mayo Clinic in the United States on Jan. 25, a month after being discharged from the same hospital following six months of treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Hours before he left Amman, the King designated his eldest son, Prince Abdullah, as Crown Prince and relieved HRH Prince Hassan from his duties after grooming him for 34 years. In a letter to Prince Hassan, the King charged his younger brother with abuse of

power in his absence.

Officials said Prince Abdullah, an army major general, marched smartly into the affairs of state, heading a Cabinet session and meeting with scores of Arab and foreign dignitaries who flew in to congratulate him and offer their support.

Foreign guests included U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright — who revised her Middle East trip itinerary last week to reaffirm U.S. support for Jordan — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and a stream of Gulf Arab princes and sheikhs and the son of Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

Prince Abdullah assured Arafat, grappling with a stalled peace process, that Jordan stands behind the Palestinian people.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned to congratulate the Crown Prince. With Israel facing elections this May and two-thirds of the electorate supporting peace, all camps are competing to prove their peace credentials with the Palestinians. Jordan and the United States. Netanyahu is coming to Amman on Sunday for talks with Prince Abdullah and senior officials.

Prince Abdullah's message to the region's leaders was that he will continue King Hussein's policies. King Hussein has stayed in close contact with Prince Abdullah who is keeping him informed of developments at home, officials have said.

"It is an extraordinary time for us all, but things are running as smooth as they can, given the difficult situation," said a senior government official. "We have concerns but we are not worried about the future of the country," he told the Jordan Times, echoing commonly heard views in official circles.

"We have to be more forward-looking and we have to achieve

ties themselves.

Diplomats said that the 15-nation European Union, which usually plays a key role in General Assembly resolutions on the Middle East, was still attempting to reach a unified final position regarding the draft resolution.

The United States insists that the issue of a Middle East settlement should be kept out of the United Nations, and an agreement negotiated between the par-

ties themselves.

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One proposal under discussion was for the resolution to call for the conference to be convened "as soon as possible," a Western diplomat said.

During a hectic week, the new Crown Prince welcomed and met with Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz, one of three senior Saudi officials who arrived in Amman in a strong show of support for Prince Abdullah.

The 37-year-old Prince has in recent years cultivated solid relations with the younger generation of Gulf princes, especially those in the military.

(Continued on page 7)

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Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday 4-5, February, 1999

## Defence minister pledges to strengthen settlements

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's defence minister wants to strengthen Jewish settlements in the coming months amid concerns that a more dovish government could come to power in May elections and impose a construction freeze, an advisor said Wednesday.

Moche Arens, who was named to the defence post last month, won effusive praise from Jewish settler leaders. "The feeling is that finally, we have our defence minister," settler leader Pinhas Wallerstein told Israel Radio.

All construction projects in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip need the approval of the defence minister.

Palestinian officials expressed concern about

Arens' plans.

"By the time we reach the elections, there will no longer be a peace process since the issue of the settlements is the most charged issue," said Nabil Amr, an adviser to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

The Palestinians hope to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, and fear their chances become more remote with each house being built in the 144 Jewish settlements scattered throughout the disputed lands.

The United States has urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to freeze construction in the settlements, but to no avail.

Netanyahu says he only builds enough to accommo-

date natural growth, but Palestinians say settlement construction is part of a land grab.

Eli Cohen, an advisor to Arens on settlement affairs, told Israel Radio that the elections were of concern to the ministry and the settlers.

"The defence ministry intends to strengthen the settlements... as soon as possible, as much as possible, before May 17," Cohen said.

Cohen noted that after the dovish Labour Party came to power in 1992, it imposed restrictions on settlement constructions in hopes of paving the way for peace talks with the Palestinians.



An Iranian soldier watches a public television broadcast of the late Islamic revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, filmed aboard the flight which brought Khomeini back to Iran in 1979 after years of living in exile in France. Iran launched Feb. 1 ten days of celebrations to mark the Islamic revolution's 20th anniversary. (AFP photo)

## Israel denies passing U.S. defence secrets to China

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel flatly denied on Wednesday U.S. press reports that it had given China secrets concerning U.S. anti-missile laser weapons.

The defence ministry, in a strongly worded statement, said the report, which appeared last week in the Washington Times newspaper that Israel had given the Chinese secrets concerning the Nautilus laser system was "unfounded."

"Israel has never shared with foreign factors any restricted American technology obtained during a joint U.S.-Israeli effort to build a battlefield laser gun," the ministry said.

The ministry said the Washington Times article "apparently bases itself on

sources of the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency" (DIA) and calls on the sources mentioned in the article "to find a way to publicly deny the accusations attributed to them."

Israel and the United States have been jointly developing the Nautilus laser gun for several years and the first of the weapons is expected to be deployed in Israel later this year.

Israel wants to use the laser to shoot down Katyushas — short range rockets used by guerrillas in neighbouring Lebanon to attack Israeli forces occupying the south of that country and communities in northern Israel.

The ministry said the Washington Times reported that U.S. techni-

cians working on the project at the state defense firm Israel Aircraft Industries saw Chinese weapons experts working at the same plant in mid-1997 and reported this to the DIA.

Later a Chinese scientist reportedly revealed details of the Nautilus technology at an international symposium, raising DIA suspicions that Israel had leaked information to China, it said.

Meanwhile the Israeli newspaper Haaretz unveiled details Wednesday of the first China-Israel arms deals carried out secretly beginning in 1979.

According to the newspaper, then-prime minister Menachem Begin turned to an Israeli billionaire with

close trade ties to China, Shaul Eisenberg, to serve as middleman in the secret sale of massive amounts of weapons technology to Beijing.

A first delegation of Israeli defence experts flew to China in Eisenberg's private jet in February 1979 for talks which led to the bilateral arms programme carried out under the codename Olympia.

The sales concerned primarily the upgrading of Soviet weaponry — a field in which Israel excelled as it sought to counter Soviet-armed Arab armies.

Haaretz said Eisenberg made commissions of \$500 million on Israel's arms sales to China during the first half of the 1980s.

## Hundreds demonstrate to support Hamas

NABLUS (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinians took to the streets of Nablus Wednesday to call for the release of 50 members of the Islamic group Hamas on hunger strike in the West Bank city's prison, witnesses said.

The prisoners, nearly all of them members of Hamas or the smaller Islamic Jihad group, have been on hunger-strike for 12 days in the Jneid prison to protest their continued detention without trial, in some cases for up to a year.

Their supporters, mostly wives and children of the detainees, carried banners reading "Political detention is a betrayal of the Palestinian people" and "Close the prisoners' file" during Wednesday's protest, the witnesses said.

A flyer distributed by Hamas during the demonstration said that a joint delegation from the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian legislature had visited the hunger-strikers.

The delegation asked the hunger-strikers to call off

their protest and instead "to start a dialogue with the authority on the releases of political prisoners."

The flyer said that the prisoners "had unanimously professed their determination to continue the strike until the dark file of political detentions is finally closed."

The PNA is estimated to be holding around 170 political prisoners without trial after releasing several dozen Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists to mark the religious festival of 'Eid Al

Fitr last month.

The most recent wave of arrests by the authority followed two suicide bomb attacks in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip soon after the signing of the U.S.-brokered Wye River land-for-security agreement with Israel in October.

Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, himself started a hunger-strike on Monday in Gaza to show his solidarity with the Jneid protesters.

## 'American pilots scared'

BAGHDAD (AP) — American pilots patrolling the "no fly" zones are scared of a direct confrontation with Iraqi defences, the commander of Iraq's air defences says.

"The United States might have a superior air force, but the American pilot is scared and he chickens out once he is inside Iraqi airspace," Gen. Shahin Al Tikriti told Al Thawra, the ruling Baath Party newspaper, in an interview published Wednesday.

"He always tries to avoid confrontation with air defences by dropping his load far from the target and escaping," he said.

Iraq has been challenging U.S. and British enforcement of "no-fly" zones, particularly over the past month, by firing surface-to-air missiles at U.S. and British aircraft.

On Monday, Saddam offered a reward of \$14,000 for any Iraqi who shoots down an American plane.

the zones in northern and southern Iraq have fired on Iraqi air defense sites, although it is unclear the extent of damage they have inflicted. No planes have been hit.

The two zones were imposed by the Western allies after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiites in the south against possible attack by the Iraqi army.

Al Tikriti reiterated Iraq's rejection of the zones, which Iraq says violate its sovereignty and have no international standing. "These lines do not exist... They are a mirage," said the general, a native of President Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

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## Russia, Kurd officials mute on Ocalan

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia and Kurdish officials in Moscow were mute on Wednesday over Turkish reports that fugitive Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan had again entered federation territory.

"We have no information about him staying in Moscow," a spokesman for the foreign ministry here told AFP. The Kremlin also refused to comment on the whereabouts of the wanted Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader.

The semi-official Anadolu news agency reported from Moscow on Tuesday that Ocalan had arrived back to Russia after failing to find a country willing to accept him following his flight from Italy on Jan. 16.

Nadezhda Spiridonova, the Moscow-based spokeswoman for the Kurdish National Liberation Front in the former Soviet Union, dismissed the report.

"The [latest] version is that Ocalan is in the Russian capital, but there are also reports of his arrival in Armenia, Belarus, Libya, South Africa, Estonia, Greece, China, Cyprus and Scandinavia," she told the Interfax news agency.

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## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers. Temperatures are expected to drop and winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba it will be rainy and cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman ..... 05/13

Aqaba ..... 12/21

Deserts ..... 04/16

Jordan Valley ..... 09/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 17, Aqaba 22

Humidity readings: Amman 59 per cent, Aqaba 68 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun ..... 04/10

Jerash ..... 05/14

Amman ..... 06/15

Madaba ..... 04/13

Petra ..... 04/14

Dead Sea ..... 10/21

The English-Language

Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al-Tusq ..... 4775233

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al-Tusq ..... 4775233

### CHURCHES

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy ..... 5661912

Al-Salam Pharmacy ..... 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy ..... 5537004

Rukn Al-Dawa Pharmacy ..... 5536169

IRBID:

Dr. Issam Al-Sani ..... 021346858

Fouad Pharmacy ..... 021275360

ZARQA:

Dr. Walid Nabhani ..... 0913851743

Palestine Pharmacy ..... 091983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 4637111

Civil Defence Department ..... 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199

Rescue Police ..... 4621111, 4621111

Fire Brigade ..... 4617101

Blood Bank ..... 4775121

Highway Police ..... 5343042

Traffic Police ..... 4896390

Public Security Dept. ..... 4630321

Hotel Complaints ..... 5605800

Price Complaints ..... 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints ..... 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121

Overseas Calls ..... 0132

Central Amman Telephone Repairs ..... 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs ..... 5661101

Jordan Television ..... 4773111

Radio Jordan ..... 4774111

### HOSPITALS

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (02)712005-6, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

0815 ..... Amman (add) (RJ)

0820 ..... Dammam (RJ)

0825 ..... Sharjah (AH)

0830 ..... Larnaca (RJ)

0835 ..... Dubai (RJ)

0840 ..... Jeddah (RJ)

0845 ..... Muscat, Dubai (GF

## Kuwait, Saudi Arabia planning to offer Jordan cheap oil

AMMAN (AFP) — Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are planning to provide Jordan with oil at a reduced price, a top Jordanian official told AFP Wednesday.

The move is "a sign of a new era of cooperation between Jordan and the two Gulf states," said the official who asked not to be named.

Jordan's Foreign Minister Abdul Rahim Khatib is due in Kuwait on Saturday for

an official visit during which an announcement is expected on the reopening of Jordan's embassy there after eight years.

"Providing Jordan with oil will also be discussed during the visit," the official said.

A stream of Gulf officials have visited Amman to congratulate Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein since his appointment as heir to the Throne on Janu-

ary 25. Prince Abdullah's meetings with Gulf dignitaries allowed the Crown Prince, who has strong ties with the Gulf royal families, to "examine ways of developing bilateral cooperation in all fields," the Jordanian official said.

Saudi Arabia stopped exporting oil to Jordan in 1990 after Amman was seen to be supporting Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait.

Before that, Amman had received 10 per cent of its oil requirements from the Saudi oil company Tapline, the rest coming from Iraq.

Since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis the U.N. sanctions committee has allowed Jordan to import all of its oil — 90,000 barrels a day — overland by truck from Iraq.



## The water pipe: Fun but deadly

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — Over the past few years, Jordanians have picked up arjeelah (water pipe) smoking as a pastime, showing a preference for what they perceive as "traditional" way of smoking and a less threatening habit than that of cigarette smoking.

The tradition of the water pipe has its roots in Turkey. It made its Arab World debut in the souks of Cairo and Damascus, then spread to Jordan and the Gulf.

Reem Saher, a young girl, says that she smokes the water pipe to fill an emotional gap in her life.

"My father left us ten years ago to work in a Gulf country and he rarely comes to visit us," she says. "This left a big gap in our family's life, which my mother has tried to bridge, with no success. So, I tried to forget my sadness by smoking arjeelah in my spare time."

Others say that smoking the flavourful water pipe has become the centrepiece of social gatherings with friends.

"It has a different taste," says Ayman Sharabati, 25.

sitting with his friends in one of Amman's coffee shops. "We enjoy it more."

Nancy Ahmad, 29, adds that she was curious to try the pipe as most of her friends were arjeelah fans.

"Some of my friends encouraged me to try it, saying that it is less dangerous than cigarettes," she explains. "But actually I know that smoking the water pipe is more dangerous than smoking cigarettes."

"I believe that we live one life, whatever we do, so why not enjoy it the way we want?" she adds.

Nadia Lutfy, an employee at a company in Amman, quips that her husband is responsible for her addiction to the "hookah."

"In the past, he used to go out with friends to smoke the water pipe and leave me at home alone, so I asked a friend who was going to Egypt to buy me an expensive and luxurious water pipe," she recounts.

"After that, I started preparing the water pipe at home and smoke it with my husband."

However, Muath Ozaizi, a doctor at one of the country's state run hospitals

tals in Amman, says that he fears arjeelah smoking is on the rise because of a common perception among people that the "traditional way of smoking tobacco derivatives is less dangerous than smoking cigarettes."

"Recently, it was proved that nicotine is an addictive material that increases blood pressure and causes the M.I.," says Ramzi Mazawi, member of the Jordan Medical Association.

"Most of the people think that nicotine of the arjeelah is dissolved and reduced by water," Ozaizi says. "These deadly materials will not be reduced or dissolved by passing through water."

"All scientific experiments emphasise that tobacco is a slow killer, and with added materials in [water pipe tobacco], like the 'muassel' (mixture of tobacco, honey and different flavours and chemical additives) it becomes an even faster killer," Ozaizi warns.

"Carbon monoxide, nicotine and tar in water pipes are well proven to be the major cause of complicated diseases, like myocardial infarction (M.I.), cerebrovascular accidents, cancer, early death and also decreases lipids," Ozaizi told the Jordan Times.

"As a result, some people quit smoking cigarettes and switched to water pipe," he says.

"But the method of burning the tobacco and the continuity of the flame above the reddish-ashy coal renders a large amount of smoke containing an abundant quantity of carbon monoxide, a leading killer agent," says Ozaizi. "The carbon monoxide emitted from the hookah is five times higher than that from cigarettes," he adds.

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### Films

"Birth of Renaissance: Giotto to Masaccio" (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Mazin Asfour) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

"Spanish police film "Tu nombre envenena mis sueños" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman on Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

### what's going on

#### Concert

Musical performance by pianist Saleem Abboud Ashkar at the Royal Cultural Centre on Sunday Feb. 7 at 8:00 p.m. (Performance includes pieces by Beethoven, Schubert, Bach, Chopin, and Schumann).

### Exhibitions

Paintings by Olivier Debré at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Feb. 25.

"Winter 1998" exhibition at the Arts Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 5529610), until Feb. 14.

Works by Mohammad Al Saifi at Books@Café, Jabal Amman, until Feb. 13 (Tel. 4650457).

Works by Victor Vasarely at the exhibition hall of the Ministry of Culture, until Feb. 8.

## Parliament urges government to aid farmers during drought

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Parliamentarians on Wednesday urged the government to intensify efforts to help farmers already facing difficulties as a result of this year's drought due to the low amount of rainfall this winter.

Deputy Ghazi Al Fayed suggested that the government reactivate the Range Land Agreement, signed between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, which allows Jordanian livestock to breed in Saudi territories.

The agreement, signed in 1979, stipulates that livestock breeders from both sides would be granted "special permission" to travel freely between the two countries' territories.

The government should act immediately to avoid the death of livestock, a matter of concern to many sectors in the country," Fayed told his colleagues during the session.

The deputy also urged the government to offer farmers vaccines to treat animals suffering from "foot-and-mouth disease" which destroys cattle herds and causes huge financial losses."

The farmers are confused because of drought, high fodder prices, and a lack of veterinary vaccines," Fayed said.

Deputy Khalid Tarawneh asked the government to approach donor countries for financial assistance to cope with the drought.

Minister of Agriculture Majeem Kreisbesh told lawmakers that the government

has undertaken certain measures to face the drought and to extend help for farmers and livestock breeders.

Kreisbesh said that among the measures his ministry adopted was a subsidies allocation to farmers and livestock breeders and an allocation of JD12 million in soft loans to those affected by the drought.

The minister said another JD500,000 were allocated to purchase vaccination from Turkey and France to fight the disease. More than 1,000,000 vaccination doses are expected to reach the Kingdom in the coming two days.

Kreisbesh said the government had already decided to open the rangeland reserves to farmers to allow their livestock to breed in these places.

Meanwhile, Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi urged Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Fayed Tarawneh to allow farmers who cultivate along the River Jordan to spend longer hours in their

fields.

Farmers near the river are forced to vacate their farms before the sunset and not allowed to enter their farms in early morning hours.

"With these conditions, farmers do not have time to take care of their lands," Abbadi told Parliament.

Deputy Majeem Sqour said he received a petition from 40 farmers in Northern Shouneh who complained that their lands were "taken" from them and allocated to "influential people."

"These people are upset because their lands were confiscated and they have been denied their rights," the deputy said.

"We urge the government to launch an investigation of those responsible for this problem," Sqour said, claiming that some people had been imprisoned for protesting this matter.

## Drivers urge cancellation of traffic law

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Around 500 drivers sent a petition to HRH Crown Prince Abdullah urging him to cancel the newly implemented traffic law which they say is unfair and has caused scores of them to lose their jobs.

"I was twice fired from my job due to the law because my licence was suspended for two months," said Ahmad Mahmoud Salameh, a bus driver and a father of nine.

The new system, implemented in April 1998, is designed to help authorities take action against repeat traffic offenders by recording points for every major violation by both Jordanian and foreign drivers holding a valid Jordanian licence.

A driver that accumulates 12 points has his or her licence revoked for two months.

"At a time when the govern-

ment fights unemployment and poverty, we join our children, unable to support them, barley making ends meet with 14 hours daily work," said the drivers in their letters to the Crown Prince.

"Driving is the only profession we have and if we lose our licences this would mean we cannot feed our children," they added.

Drivers also complain that the implementation of the law is dependent on "moody" traffic officers.

The 500 drivers claim they have no knowledge in the one year old law, and that they do not have a union to protect them or voice their concerns through the appropriate channels.

"We spend most of our day working, cut off from the rest of the world, which leads us to a state of ignorance of the new law."

In a gesture of good will,

Police officials said the Traffic Department published the law on the television and radio and in newspapers months before implementing it to avoid any misunderstandings of the rules of the new law.

"The Traffic Department is ready at any time to publish the new law to raise people's awareness of it," said Adnan Shamaileh, director of the Traffic Department.

One bus driver, working on the much travelled Amman-Sweileh route, criticised the 500 drivers for demanding the cancellation of the law "just because they do not know about it."

"The law was put to save our lives from hasty drivers and should not be changed," said the driver Mustafa Abu Meshrif.

Other regulations stipulate that upon a driver's first violation, a file will be opened. After

accumulating 11 points, he or she must attend a "drivers' rehabilitation" course at a state-sponsored driving school.

Violations are worth one to four points, and include driving without a licence or under the influence of alcohol or drugs; failure to stop at red lights; failure to report to the nearest police station in the event of an accident that leads to injury; using a forged licence plate, and violating one-way street rules.

The annual number of traffic accidents in Jordan is among the highest in the world, and increases by an annual average 10 per cent each year. Recent statistics released by the Traffic Department indicate that around 500 people were killed or seriously injured in Jordan in 1997 as a result of a road accidents.

## Agricultural engineers press for more allowances

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Several thousand agricultural engineers on Tuesday organised a one-hour sit-in in front of the Union of Professional Associations headquarters, calling on the government to amend their allowances, as it did last year for medical professionals.

No physical confrontations were reported to have occurred between the riot police who, armed with batons, surrounded the crowd.

Prime Minister Fayed Tarawneh gave the green light for the raise, but the government never issued a decision to raise allowances," said Hassan Jaber, president of the association.

Jaber said the association was forced to protest after losing

trust in the government and its intention to remedy their situation.

Participants said they were angered by the government's determination not to grant the engineers the raise and criticised the Cabinet for a "policy of procrastination."

"Whenever we refer to the government, they give us sweet talk but nothing happens," said Amjad Abu Zreig, who participated in the protest. "They have to realise that we are serious and will continue our campaign until the government gives us what we want."

"Holding a march is not a violation of the law or the Con-

## Phosphate company to build housing estate in Ma'an

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Naser Judeh Tuesday said the government has assigned the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) to prepare an overall plan for a housing estate to be built in Ma'an to accommodate families of workers in the Shidieh Phosphate Mines.

Judeh made the statement after a Cabinet session Tuesday, which was chaired by HRH Crown Prince Abdullah for the

first time since his designation as heir to the Throne.

The Cabinet discussed progress in constructing a housing estate for families of workers of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMMC).

Judeh said the estate will be built on 500 dunums in Ma'an close to the industrial estate. He added that the first phase of the project includes the construction

of 740 housing units at an estimated cost of JD25 million, while the second phase includes the construction of 340 units at an estimated cost of JD14 million. The plan includes schools and other facilities.

Judeh expects the overall plan to be ready within 30 days. The JPMMC is currently coordinating with financiers to secure the funds necessary to carry out the first phase.

## Politicians take agenda of political reform to Crown Prince Abdullah

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — Politicians appear to be wasting no time to impress their desire to see greater political and democratic reforms on HRH Prince Abdullah, the Regent, who was appointed Crown Prince only 10 days ago.

Leaders of the influential Muslim Brotherhood, a key ally of the regime on many occasions in the past four decades, and its political arm, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), were among hundreds of politicians who flocked to Rashedan Palace last Thursday to congratulate Prince Abdullah on his appointment and to pledge allegiance to the Hashemite Throne.





## Jordan Times

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### Sound tactic to end conflict

NATO SEEMS to be trying a new tactic with the warring parties in Kosovo. It is warning them either to go to France and talk or else face the wrath of the alliance's air power. This latest effort by the Western powers to end the bloodshed in Kosovo between its ethnic Albanian majority and the Serb forces is certainly a novelty in international affairs and conflict resolution. Should it work, the same tactic could be deployed elsewhere in the world.

The Serb side of course has more to lose through this negotiating dynamic than the weaker ethnic Albanians. NATO is right in resorting to this arm-twisting diplomacy. Left alone, Belgrade will never negotiate a sensible deal with the people of Kosovo. Only an effective intervention by the major powers would bring peace to the province.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was the first to accept the NATO offer. Belgrade, on the other hand, is typically and predictably dragging its feet because it knows that once it sits on the negotiating table, NATO will be close overhead, watching and gauging every negotiating move it takes. The parameters of the ultimate solution in Kosovo are already clear enough: "high degree of self-government to Kosovo," that could lead to an eventual independence and sovereignty for the ethnic Albanians. Such a solution appears to be the only sensible one. No foreign power should be allowed to subjugate another people against its will. Belgrade's presence and exercise of sovereignty over Kosovo and its people is a new form of occupation that the international community is not willing to accept.

Any political settlement to the Kosovo conflict should not, however, end the call for accountability for all the crimes against humanity that were committed there. Last month's massacre of 45 Albanians by Serb forces should not be forgotten simply because a settlement looms on the horizon. Accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity is a separate issue that needs to be pursued with vigour and determination. Belgrade should accept the investigation of the massacre and similar crimes as long as it denies responsibility. The same goes for the other side. Anything short of that would make a mockery of the international consensus that the investigation and punishment of war crimes and crimes against humanity are an integral part of the new world order.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kawar said that when the Ministry of Health decided to approve Viagra in the local market it was a response to public demand. The decision was taken after comprehensive studies and tests, making its use conditional upon prescription, added Kawar. Polls conducted on the issue showed that there is a notable demand for the medicine, and though the ministry hasn't received any complaints this does not mean that the drug is totally safe, said the writer. The ministry's decision was correct, but the implementation was wrong, stated Kawar. It is not enough to warn people about the medicine, there ought to be regulations and laws regulating its use and availability.

Al Dastour's Mazen Saket said he wants to reevaluate the official statement made after the Arab Foreign Ministers' meeting regarding Iraq. In the statement, the ministers stressed their opposition to any military or non-U.N. solution, their recognition of Iraq's unity and their refusal to interfere in the country's internal affairs, said Saket. Those who have followed the recent incidents in the region, find these developments and some Arab stands in total contradiction with the statement. The allied strikes continue, the U.S. air embargo is still imposed, and attempts to destroy the Iraqi regime are under way, said Saket. Where is the Arab stand, he asked?

## Education that is still textbook-based

BOTH OUR SCHOOL and university classroom is, on the whole, textbook based. That is, for every school subject or university course, we have either one or more textbooks, or we try to. The assumption is, and it is largely correct, that a textbook is needed for each class.

Each time you meet your students, it is not only preferable but also necessary to have a text in front of each to look at, read from, quote from, comment on, analyse, etc. If there is no text in front of a group, the discussion will most likely be either too abstract or unfocused.

There was a time when textbooks were either unavailable or hard to obtain. That was a problem. Students' and teachers' primary task (in many cases it was the sole task) was to obtain information. In this context, the teacher was provider of knowledge. He/she collected information and passed it on to students. Not only was classroom interaction minimal (teachers transmitted, students received) but the teacher filled in the gap created by the absence of the textbook

— he/she became a textbook, in other words. In the best of cases, he explained some of the information he gathered and transmitted. This practice or role, teachers as textbooks, is still prevalent in some disciplines where textbooks have not been designed or found yet.

When textbooks came into existence, they endowed the teaching/learning process with a great deal of integrity. The educational process was influenced positively. Not only were teachers and students relieved from the unpleasant, boring and somewhat unfruitful process of recital and recording, but they also started to afford going beyond the literal text and surface meaning into deeper interpretation and analyses.

The textbook is an important catalyst for excellent classroom interaction. By making at least the minimal needed information available, it enables students and teachers to examine, look into, think, and analyse.

Textbooks, then, are a blessing. But while textbooks are important for the reasons just stated, they have at least one harmful side-

effect. Not only do textbooks give the impression that what they contain in them is the truth (the whole truth, that is) but they also often prevent teachers and students from pursuit of knowledge beyond textbooks. Textbooks ease access to information, they are convenient to use, but students and teachers may get too reliant on them at times. This deprives students from the opportunity to explore multiple perspectives and complex arguments.

Textbook writers or compilers either simplify or fragment. They do not want to "confuse," "distract," "bewilder," or "corrupt" students. This is why they tend to either summarise or select what is "appropriate" or "easy to handle." Since one of the noblest aims of education is to broaden students' horizons, textbooks, by placing knowledge in a nutshell as it were, tend to somewhat undermine such broadness. They limit students' freedom of thought, and they impose simplified and incomplete formulae on them. As a result, students may develop simple-mindedness and overconfidence.

### View from Academia



Dr. Ahmad Y. Majdoubah

The problem with textbooks, in other words, is that they often either discourage or prevent students from seeking information and knowledge in other books.

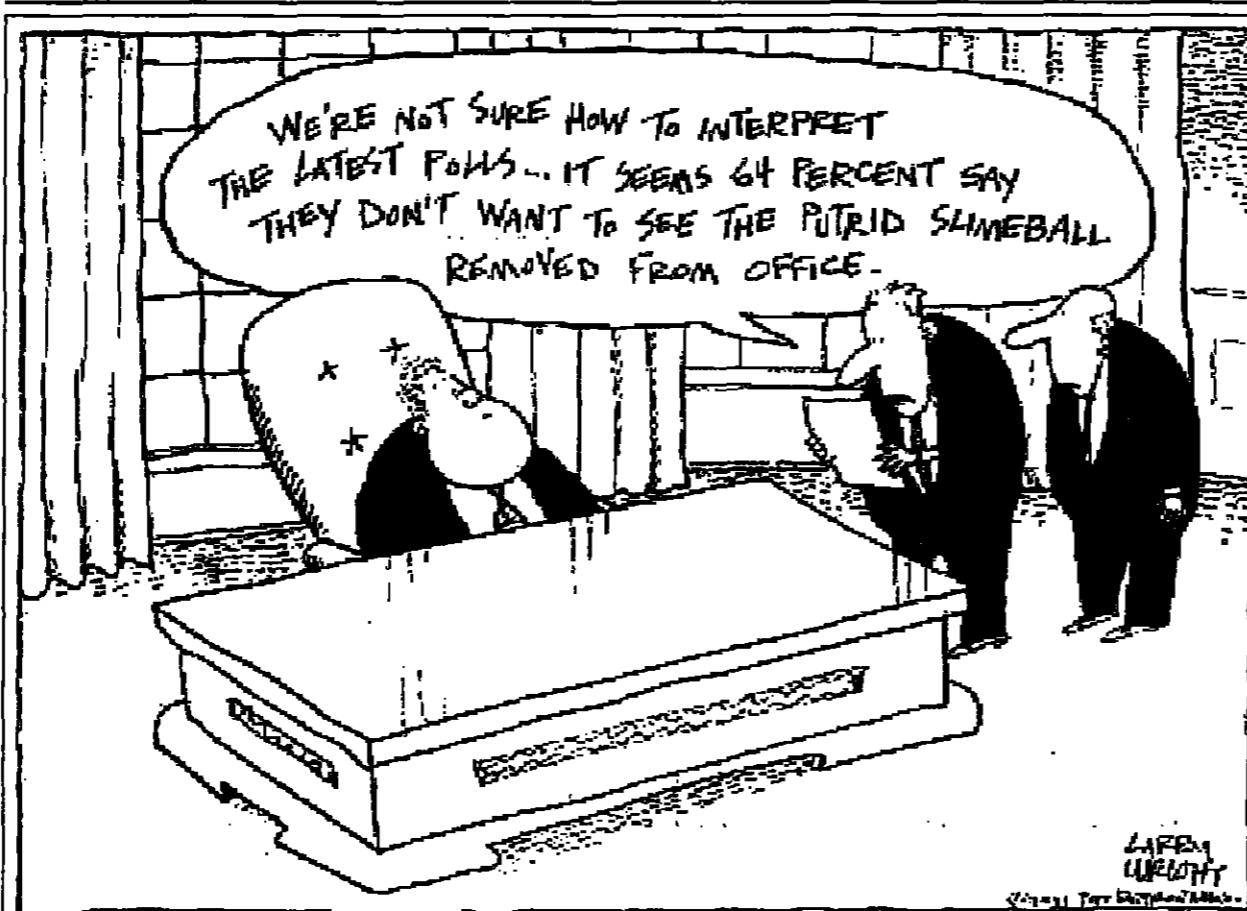
One may hasten to ask rhetorically: what prevents students from reading both textbooks and books?

I hasten to agree with the spirit of the question: students should not be prevented from reading books on top of textbooks. A student may read a textbook, but he/she should also seek information in other

books.

In principle, this is not only reasonable but correct. In practice, there are at least three problems with it. For one thing, our reliance on textbooks (as both individuals and institutions) affects negatively our acquisition of books. Our libraries (at the school and university levels) are generally poor in holdings. Secondly, textbooks tend to make students lazy. Why read from several books, and search through endless catalogues and book stacks, when a textbook gives the summary of an issue in a nutshell? Furthermore, our education is still exam oriented. How can students who read books outside textbooks be evaluated in exams. Most teachers, whether you like it or not, judge you on the basis of the answers you bring from the textbooks, not on the basis of those which you bring from other books.

Textbooks are important in a class, but students encounter with knowledge should go beyond what these textbooks have. Our curricula should be textbook-based, but they should not be based only on textbooks.



## A yen for the glittering euro

THE WORLD monetary scene is changing, particularly with the advent of the euro, though there is more to it than that. However, let's take a look at the euro first. Within the next three years, everybody from central bankers and the treasurers of multinational corporations to small businesses and ordinary households will have the euro as a real and simple option to exercise when considering how to hold reserves and savings. And exercise it they will, with many observers predicting a big role for the euro as a reserve currency within less than a decade. The Arab and other states in the Mediterranean region will be particularly avid fans of the new currency, especially as Euro-Med trade agreements become more important over the next few years.

So where does all this leave the dollar? For the past fifty years, the U.S. currency has been the closest thing available to world money, but not so much now as a decade or two ago. True, most people in most places and in the Middle East in particular — whether Saudi housewives, Kuwaiti bankers, or businesspeople in Beirut — regard the dollar as their second-favourite currency, after their national one. In fact, in some places such as Lebanon and Israel in the 1980s, the dollar was the number one currency, with business and monetary life being "dollarised." In Beirut just a decade or so ago, buying a sandwich or a newspaper let alone acquiring a new house, piece of land, car etc., was often undertaken in dollars. In fact the dollar still circulates in Lebanon alongside the rejuvenated Lebanese pound. However, I among many others have little doubt in the case of Lebanon in particular but also for most of the rest of the region, that the euro will be a strong competitor to the dollar, everywhere from households and malls to the coffers of commercial and central banks.

As the euro waxes, other things that serve as a monetary reserve may be losing their glitter. This is becoming obvious in the case of gold. Not too long ago, people in many parts of the world, especially the Middle East, put great faith in gold. As late as the 1970s, the price of gold would often rise sharply on bad news, as both rich and poor stocked up the metal "just in case." This is no longer true; and while it would be a mistake to dismiss gold completely as a reserve for ladies buying jewellery or for wary

central bankers, there is little doubt that its role as a hedge in times of trouble will continue to diminish. Even in the Middle East, traditionally a big gold consumer, major buying over the next few years is unlikely. We might expect people and governments in the region to buy gold if the oil price soars, but this doesn't look like it's going to happen for some time. A look at the figures (see box) seems to confirm the waning Middle East appetite for gold.

In both Jordan and Egypt, along with most other countries in the region, central bank gold holdings have stagnated, and have in any case been falling relative to foreign exchange reserves. (Note that these and other official valuations of gold tend to underestimate its price relative to the market; nevertheless, the trend has been down.)

The figures for other developing and developed states are similar, as some central banks even seek to divest themselves of gold. The final nail in gold's coffin might have come with a recent vote in the Swiss Parliament's lower house approving legislation that may in due course permit the Swiss Central Bank to sell some of its bullion. The Swiss authorities are not exactly profligate when it comes to monetary matters, and their gradual abandonment of gold means that other countries may not be far behind in taking similar steps. As this happens, the euro could partly replace these gold holdings.

The other factor that may also help the euro establish itself is the possibly imminent collapse of the yen. Japan, whether it wants to or not, must soon admit that the only way to stem its deflation is to print a huge amount of

Egypt's gold and foreign exchange reserves, annual averages for fiscal years 1993/4-1997/8, in \$ billions

1993/4 1994/5 1995/6 1996/7 1997/8

	Gold	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6
Foreign exchange	13.6	15.8	16.6	18.6	18.9	

Jordan's gold and foreign exchange reserves, end of period 1994-8, in \$ billions

1994 1995 1996 1997 1998(Oct.)

	Gold	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Foreign exchange	1.6	1.7	1.8	2.2	1.8	

### Developing World



Riad al Khouri

money. Of course, this will cause a drop in the yen. Now, trading at around 115 to the dollar, the yen will probably stay strong until the end of March, the close of the Japanese fiscal year, before sliding. When that happens, Asian and other holders of yen could turn to the euro.

Obviously, the eclipse of gold and the yen could also benefit the dollar — which itself doesn't look like it's going to be in trouble in the near future. Other options, though minor, could also be currencies like sterling and the Swiss franc. However, for countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and their neighbours, whose trade with the eleven countries of Euroland is growing, the euro will be a favourite with central bankers and others during the coming few years. At the same time, Euroland itself will probably be expanding to take in the four remaining EU national currencies that remain outsiders. When that happens, the euro will look even more attractive than it is now, and the day when a euro note will buy you a meal in Beirut will not be that far away.

Developing World

## Jerusalem revisited

### Jerusalem Life



Daoud Kuttab

than one person stood up and said: "I need a simple house." The questions kept coming: Why has the old city of Hebron got more money than the old city of Jerusalem? Oslo is not an excuse, the PLO was able to work when it was considered illegal by Israel, and it was located in far away Tunis.

For their part Husseini and company tried to defend their position. He started by reminding the television host that he represents the PLO and not the PNA. The Oslo Agreement prohibits the PNA from working in Jerusalem while the PLO is a legitimate address in the holy city. The problems of Jerusalem are much greater than can be resolved. He outlined the difficulties in spending money earmarked for Jerusalem where some of the Gulf donors insist on proper housing permits before a housing loan is given, and the Israelis are not forthcoming.

We have money that we can't spend, he said. Husseini reminded the audience of the difficulty in working in Jerusalem when the Israelis kick out any organisation that has any connection to the PNA, and said that in Hebron the improvements have only happened in the areas under Palestinian control. The old city of Jerusalem is an area C. Husseini also reminded the audience of the many improvements that have happened: fixing homes that were falling apart; giving some aid to the needy and homeless; and supporting Palestinian institutions — mainly youth clubs. Those who help never come to these meetings, only those who don't.

Talk about stones, rather than people did not please Nora Qurt, whose charity runs a medical clinic, nor community organiser Terry Boulatta. What is needed is community leadership, and development of human resources to embark self-dependency, they argued. Mohammad Shadid from the Welfare Association agreed, and said his organisation has placed legal help and vocational training high on their grant policy.

More than two hours of discussion proved how much work is needed in Jerusalem. But although the Palestinian leaders were often on the defensive, it was clear that this was a family affair. With the exception of a couple of genuinely interested Israelis the scene was pure Palestinian and it had magic of the sort you see when people realise their own power. The Israeli municipality of Jerusalem and the Israeli government, which considers Jerusalem its undivided capital, were absent physically and mentally.

## Cyprus in international

### Arafat, Albridge, 'revolving door'

### 'Smooth' of

# The truth, what's that?

*In October the Truth and Reconciliation Committee accused FW de Klerk of covering up state-orchestrated bombings of churches and the South African TUC. Now he's promoting his autobiography, in an effort to tell his side of the story.*

By Gary Younge

THE RECENT HISTORY of South Africa according to FW de Klerk goes something like this: A white minority government, ruled by a series of benevolent dictators, was keen to devolve power to the black majority as equal partners. Some white extremists meted out a degree of racial injustice and neither the blacks nor the rest of the international community were interested in the deal. So the white rulers decided the most reasonable and fair thing to do was give up their power and hand it over to people they had previously seen fit to put in prison. They were led by Nelson Something-or-other — a nice chap, although he could get uppity on occasions and proved something of a disappointment to those keen on establishing a democratic, non-racial country.

"When we handed over power in 1994 there was not one discriminatory law on the statute book," says De Klerk, a heavy smoker with a warm manner and deeply furrowed brow. "In that sense the National Party abolished apartheid, not the new government." The man who insisted that South Africa could not "tamper with the policy of separate development but must abandon it completely," is now tinkering with history.

He is no longer the politician who was forced to end illegitimate white rule because of mass protest and international condemnation but, according to the Sunday Telegraph,

"the man who legislated himself out of power"; no longer history's receptacle but its master.

"We started the process in 1986 under PW Botha," he says, referring to the former president who declared the state of emergency in 1985 and who was deemed, in a report to the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, to be accountable for "gross violations of human rights" when he ran the country from 1978 to 1989.

"It was then we said: One united South Africa, one citizenship, one vote. There was a strong moral element in this," De Klerk says.

By the time he took over in 1989

things had changed. The Berlin Wall was coming down, Israelis and Palestinians were at the negotiating table and the world was waiting for events in South Africa to unravel and hoping not too much blood would be shed in the process. Whether De Klerk, now 60, did the right thing at the right time, or was simply in the right place at the right time, is a moot point.

"History did present me with an opportunity to move faster and take my constituency with me but we had to seize the opportunity." This is De Klerk's story and not only is he sticking to it, he is roaming the world actively promoting it in his autobiography, *The Last Trek, A New Beginning*.

Biographers were probably never going to be kind to De Klerk. True, he played a significant role in steering his country from pariah autocracy to a democracy embraced by the

international community. But there was also the sticky matter of the 17 years as a National Party MP, during which he rose through the party ranks while it committed some of the most unspeakable atrocities in recent times.

De Klerk does not so much have a skeleton in his closet as a whole coterie doing the can-can all around his bedroom. In October, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee accused him of covering up a state-orchestrated bombing of the South African Council of Churches in 1988 and the Congress of South African Trade Unions in 1987.

"The fact is, I didn't know," he says. "I didn't know because it was hidden from me, as it was hidden from other political decision-makers. And some of the heads of police and the defence forces, it was also hidden from them." If he truly wanted to secure a favourable place in history one wonders why he did not simply bow out gracefully after he shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993.

"I felt a duty to stay on and finish what I had set out to do. I wanted to see the process through to its logical conclusion, not secure my place in history." The tone of the book suggests that he realised that if he was going to be sure of a good write-up he would have to do it himself. When he abandoned politics in August 1997, the former National Party leader said he was retiring to pen a work which would place events in South Africa "in their correct per-

spective".

*'The man who insisted that South Africa could not 'tamper with the policy of separate development but must abandon it completely,' is now tinkering with history'*

spective".

"I wanted people to look at our history in its proper time frame," he says. "The same mistakes that we made were still being made in the United States and the ex-colonies. Then we carried them on for around 20 years longer. It was a time when we thought it would go away. But the average moderate white South

African family never hated black people. They made many mistakes, but they weren't arch racists as has been dictated by propaganda." De Klerk's "perspective" is selective. The Sharpeville massacre and the shootings in Soweto — two landmark incidents of the apartheid years — get a paragraph each in his book.

Asked whether he felt compelled to speak out against the Soweto uprisings, which took place while he was an MP, he says: "I was very shocked by it and I was critical of Treuericht's [then the former National Party leader] attitude to his brief.

But I was not in the country at the time. I was in Germany on my way to the U.S." Given that De Klerk has had more than 20 years to come up with an explanation one must assume this is the best he can do.

His attempt to rehabilitate his political legacy is made none the easier by the fact that his name is constantly matched against the most popular politician in the world. "I am not jealous of Nelson Mandela. I recognise him as a big man. But religiously speaking I don't think that any human being can be sanctified to the extent that they cannot make mistakes." It is clear that he believes in a multi-racial democracy, now that it is a reality. But it is difficult to see how he got there — it is as though he simply fell asleep and woke up at Damascus without having any of the blinding revelations on the way.

He comes from a long line of Afrikaaner heavyweights — his great-grandfather was a senator, his grandfather a Boer war combatant and his father a cabinet minister.

"When I was a young man, I supported the idea of building a federation that would be a look a little bit like Europe," he says. "The Zulus would have Zululand, like the French have France, the Xhosas would have their own country like the Germans and the Afrikaans would have theirs, and all these different nation-states would be held together by something like the European Union.

"But there was a lack of international support for this and the majority of blacks resisted it. They didn't want a slice of the cake, they wanted the whole cake and to have a say in how it was divided." And then there was that other nasty business — the racism. "Things were done which were morally indefensible. The humiliations, the divisions of people, the forced removals. That was wrong." Within a few years he says he realised that the races in South Africa had lived side by side for too long for any separation to be effective or anything other than forced.

"It was like an omelette," he says, contributing yet another culinary metaphor to racial discourse alongside the melting pot and salad bowl. "An omelette which we couldn't undo."

*The Last Trek, A New Beginning by FW de Klerk is published by Macmillan. £20.*

— The Independent

## Cyprus in new push for international peace force

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The government of Cyprus is to launch a new diplomatic drive for the deployment of an international force on the divided Mediterranean island, Foreign Minister Yannakis Cassoulides said here Wednesday.

Cassoulides said the deployment of such a force, possibly organised by NATO, would allow the island to be demilitarised and could take place "even before we have found a political settlement."

The initiative follows a reduction in tensions in the region after the Dec. 30 decision by the Greek-Cypriot government not to proceed with the

threatened deployment of Russian ground-to-air missiles.

Cassoulides said the proposed peacekeeping force would require a U.N. Security Council mandate and could only go ahead with the agreement of Turkey, which has occupied northern Cyprus since 1974.

Once the international force was deployed, both Turkey, which has an estimated 35,000 troops stationed in the north of Cyprus, and Greece, which has a much smaller contingent in the south, would be expected to withdraw their forces.

The Greek-Cypriot national guard would also be progressively dismantled.

tled.

Cassoulides added that the Cypriot government, which has begun negotiations with a view to joining the European Union (EU), was prepared to meet the operating costs of the international force.

He said he would be pressing the initiative in upcoming talks with U.S. officials in Washington.

Cassoulides said Cyprus would be ready for EU membership in 2003 but acknowledged that he expected accession not to take place before 2005. A number of EU governments have repeatedly made it clear that there is no question of Cyprus being brought into the bloc while it remains

divided.

A U.N. force of some 1,200 troops is currently based in Cyprus, charged with policing the green line that divides north and south.

Cassoulides said the international force he envisaged would be much bigger and would be deployed across the island.

He said he favoured a NATO force as both Greece and Turkey are members of the alliance, which could make deployment easier.

Cyprus has been divided since Turkey occupied its northern third in 1974 following a Greek-Cypriot coup aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

## Libya has received 'most' guarantees for Lockerbie trial to start — Musa

CAIRO (AFP) — Libya has received "most" of the guarantees it demanded to allow the start of a trial of two Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie bombing. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said in an interview published Wednesday.

"Libya has got most of the guarantees and I hope that the two suspects will soon be extradited" by Tripoli to the Netherlands where the trial is set to take place, Musa told the London-based Arab newspaper *Al Hayat*.

"The Lockerbie case is on its way to being solved and the Libyan, U.N. and British authorities are about to reach a comprehensive agreement," Musa said.

In August, the United States and Britain agreed to holding a trial in the Netherlands of the two Libyans suspected of masterminding the December 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that left 270 dead.

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi accepted the compromise, but has called for the suspects, if found guilty, to be imprisoned in the Netherlands, not elsewhere. This has been rejected by London and Washington.

Musa's remarks to *Al Hayat* came as a British newspaper reported on Wednesday that secret talks involving a senior Saudi official were underway to secure the handing over of the Libyan suspects.

The Guardian said that the Saudi ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, had travelled to Tripoli last month to try and secure a deal over the affair.

## Last minute update

By Jean-Claude Elias

**chip talk**

in cache memory. Not yet on the market, in Jordan at least.

On the lighter side (received over the Internet from an anonymous source)

**BIT** — A word used to describe computers, as in "our son's computer cost quite a bit."

**DISK** — What goes out in your back after bending over a computer keyboard for seven hours a day.

**ERROR** — What you made the first time you walked into a computer showroom to "just look."

**EXPANSION UNIT** — The new room you have to build on to your home to house your computer and all its peripherals.

**FILE** — What your secretary can do to her nails six hours a day, now that the computer does her day's work in 30 minutes.

**FLOPPY** — The condition of a constant computer user's stomach due to lack of exercise and a steady diet of junk food.

**IBM** — The kind of missile your family members and friends would like to drop on your computer so you'll pay attention to them again. (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile)

**MENU** — What you'll never see again after buying a computer because you'll be too poor to eat in a restaurant.

**PROGRAMMES** — Those things you used to look at on television before you hooked your computer up to it.

**WINDOW** — What you leave the computer out of after you accidentally erase a programme that took you three days to set up.

**VOODOO** — No it's not what you think. This is the latest craze in terms of screen accelerators for sophisticated games. Plug one inside your PC and play "Flight Simulator" or "The Need for Speed" like you've never done it before.

**XEON** — The recently announced Pentium processor. Newer than the current Pentium II, the Xeon has more processing power and more built-

## Arafat, Albright hold talks on 'revolving door' for prisoners

(Continued from page 1)

Rep. Sam Gejdenson, a co-host of a luncheon for Arafat, said continuation of the now-stalled peace process is the only hope for the region.

"There are lots of issues that have to be dealt with in the Middle East," he said in an interview. "The American role is to push this process forward."

Gejdenson, the senior Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, said he was "frankly fearful if we do not

do this in the near term it doesn't necessarily become easier in the future."

The other host is Rep. Amo Houghton, whose family donated the Wye conference centre where negotiations over the West Bank were held last October.

Albright is hoping the visit can give a push to the stalled land-for-peace accord the Clinton administration engineered between Israel and the Palestinians at Wye.

It calls for Israel to pull back on the West Bank in exchange for measures by the Palestinians to curb ter-

rorism.

The latest flap concerns Israeli claims that five Islamists suspected in attacks in which Americans were victims had been set free.

Rubin said: "We have checked into this thoroughly, and we have not seen any evidence that would confirm the charges that the individuals released were involved in the killing of Americans."

The Palestinians had called the charges "nonsense."

## Weizman cuts terms for Israelis who killed Arabs

(Continued from page 1)

The Israeli human rights group Betsleem quickly challenged Hanegbi, noting that while Israel had released Palestinians involved in anti-Israel violence, it had never pardoned an Arab convicted of murdering a Jew.

The group said that since 1987, Israeli civilians had killed 112 Palestinians in the occupied territories and only two of them were sentenced to life in prison for the crime.

Both of these, Skolnik and Nahshon Wohls, a U.S. immigrant who shot and killed a pregnant Palestinian woman in 1990, subsequently had their sentences reduced by Weizman to 15 and 13 years respectively.

Nahshon Wohls, a U.S. immigrant who shot and killed a pregnant Palestinian woman in 1990, subsequently had their sentences reduced by Weizman to 15 and 13 years respectively.

"All the steps were taken according to law... This is an entirely different situation," he told reporters.

The Israeli decision to cut the sentences of the five Israelis coincided with a public relations campaign by the Netanyahu government against the recent release by the PNA of several dozen Islamists, including up to 30 who Israel says were involved in deadly attacks.

The Palestinians deny that any of those released played a role in the attacks.

Both of these, Skolnik and Nahshon Wohls, a U.S. immigrant who shot and killed a pregnant Palestinian woman in 1990, subsequently had their sentences reduced by Weizman to 15 and 13 years respectively.

Prince Hassan was seen on state television attending ceremonies congratulating the new Crown Prince. The new and former Crown Princes kissed and embraced. His cousin Rashed, the son of Prince Hassan, has appeared with Prince Abdullah at various meetings.

"Jordanians are also eager for political reforms and they want to give a chance to the young chap, who appears to be following his father's policy and footstep," he added.

While many analysts say it is too early to assess Prince Abdullah's performance and how he will handle the challenges ahead, others say the new Crown Prince, who enjoys the backing of the Hashemite family and the army, has the makings of a leader.

Officials and analysts are studying the day-to-day affairs of the state.

Officials and analysts have been vocal in dispelling foreign and Arab media reports casting doubt on Jordan's stability after the change in succession.

Still, the challenges that lie ahead for Jordan may be as dangerous as those the Kingdom has faced in the last 47 years.

While many analysts say it is too early to assess Prince Abdullah's performance and how he will handle the challenges ahead, others say the new Crown Prince, who enjoys the backing of the Hashemite family and the army, has the makings of a leader.

## 'Smooth' change of succession underlines strength of country's institutions, analysts say

(Continued from page 1)

In yet another sign of improving relations with Gulf Arab states, the new heir met with Kuwait's Interior Minister Prince Mohammad Khaled Al Sabah. Their meeting resulted in an agreement to reopen Jordan's embassy in Kuwait, closed since 1991 because of Amman's perceived support for Baghdad following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khithi is due in Kuwait Saturday for an official visit.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are planning to provide Jordan with oil at a reduced price, according to a report

carried by the French news agency AFP. Jordan presently imports all of its oil needs overland by truck from Iraq (see separate story page 3).

The move by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait could be another signal that relations with the Gulf states, which deteriorated during the Gulf crisis, could finally be on the mend.

The transition of power has been very smooth and showed that the state and the institutional structure Jordan has built over the years were able to absorb the change," said another official, requesting anonymity.

Officials and ordinary Jordanians hope for a longer transition for Prince Abd-

# 8 Economy

## Commodity prices may recover after '99

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Global commodity prices, battered by economic turmoil in Asia and oversupply, may start to rebound after this year but may never fully recover from current lows, the World Bank warned Wednesday.

The bank in a report issued here said prices for commodities such as petroleum, non-timber agricultural materials and metals and minerals are expected to decline further in 1999 in response to weak demand, large supplies and rising inventories.

Continued weakness in commodity prices will likely hurt countries that rely on raw materials, including the developing world and many of the world's poorest nations.

In the fourth quarter of 1998 energy price indices

were down 8.9 per cent over the third quarter, while non-energy prices were 0.7 per cent lower.

"Beyond 1999 we expect commodity prices to begin to recover, but the recovery is expected to be slow and very much dependent upon the growth in the world economies," the report predicted.

From 2000 to 2010, most prices should move off the depressed levels of 1998-1999, it said, but added: "In almost all cases, real prices in 2010 are expected to remain below the 1997 levels because of projected more rapid increases in supply than demand."

But the bank elsewhere argued that in response to the Asian meltdown, as well as to technological advances dramatically boosting output and liber-

alised market policies that lead to higher production, the world may be undergoing "a structural break in price levels."

"If we are experiencing a structural break in commodity prices, we would not expect prices to fully recover from current low levels," the authors said.

"Improvements in technology and more efficient operations do not erode quickly and their impact would remain even after the Asian crisis has ended," they added.

While global growth may edge up to 1.9 per cent this year from 1.8 per cent in the 1998, the study warned there remained "a substantial risk that the world economy will plunge into recession in 1999."

In 1999, as economic momentum cools in Europe

and the United States and as emerging markets stay volatile because of weakness in Brazil and Russia, agricultural commodity prices are projected to fall five per cent.

Beverage prices could decline 12 per cent while those for agricultural raw materials are expected to fall six to three per cent.

Declines are also foreseen in oil because of high inventory levels and the reluctance of producers to curb output, as are prices for metals and minerals in response to weak demand and rising production.

In the troubled economies of Asia, the report noted, demand for commodities shrivelled as incomes fell and prices for imported goods rose after currencies were devalued in 1997.

The devaluations in turn

reduced the value commodities exported by those countries.

Prices were dealt a further blow by sharp increases in supplies.

Favourable weather conditions led to higher agricultural yields, exemplified by the grain sector where world production increased 10.5 per cent from 1995 to 1997.

Reacting to price hikes in 1993 and 1994, aluminium output jumped six per cent in 1996 and 4.5 per cent the following year, copper production gained 9.1 and 2.9 per cent and nickel output rose 11.4 per cent from 1995 to 1997.

Other factors leading to production surges were policy reforms and increased privatisation that offered incentives to increase output, according to the bank.

Jordan Times, Thursday-Friday, February 4-5, 1999

Exchange Rates								Wednesday, 03-02-99		ACCESS 4646868	
CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	GB POUND	EURO	YEN	DEUTSCHE MARK	FRANC	SWITZERLAND FRANC	GB POUND	US DOLLAR	ACCESS	US DOLLAR
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.6789	0.1944	2.3343	0.2077	0.7080			
SAUDI RIYAL	5.2899	1.0000	0.2010	9.9485	0.1930	12.3673	1.1094	3.7510			
EGYPTIAN DINAR	5.1835	0.9785	1.0000	8.7423	0.9428	1.0089	1.1134	1.0778	3.6740		
BAHAMIAN DOLLAR	0.5456	0.1026	0.1048	1.0211	1.0000	0.1057	1.3694	0.1058	0.3050	0.3050	
QATARI RIYAL	5.1498	0.9709	0.9912	9.6567	0.9487	1.0000	12.0069	0.9880	3.4053		
ROMANIAN LEU *	0.4284	0.0809	0.0828	0.8044	0.7878	0.0833	1.0000	0.1792	1.0000	1.0000	
LEBANESE LIRA	8.6145	0.9087	0.9278	9.0407	0.8835	0.9360	11.2387	0.1251	0.1105	0.3770	
INDIAN RUPEE	0.5438	0.1028	0.1048	1.0211	1.0000	0.1057	1.3694	0.1058	0.3050	0.3050	
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2686	0.2722	2.6522	2.5973	0.2746	3.2971	0.2934	1.0000	0.6104	
GERMAN MARK	0.8821	0.1627	0.1661	1.6184	1.5863	0.1676	2.0124	0.1791	0.5059	1.7248	
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.9895	0.3765	0.3834	3.7359	3.6586	0.3868	4.6442	1.6988	5.7839		
FRANCE FRANC	1.8184	1.5420	1.3743	15.3404	15.0285	1.5863	19.0700	1.5224	1.2220		
ITALY YEN *	1.5647	0.2931	0.3035	2.9758	2.9142	0.3081	3.6993	0.3224	1.9431		
HOLLAND GULDEN	2.7445	0.5180	0.5288	5.1537	5.0470	0.5336	6.4098	0.5701	1.8243		
SWEDISH KRONA	11.1350	2.1017	2.1458	20.9062	20.4764	2.1648	25.1000	2.3126	7.8836		
ITALY LIRA*	24.1147	4.5516	4.6470	45.2622	44.3448	4.6582	56.2914	4.8097	17.0752		
BELGIAN FRANC	50.2401	9.4828	9.9815	94.3405	92.3871	9.7674	117.2765	10.4351	35.5700		
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.1883	0.4149	0.4238	4.1280	4.0425	0.4274	5.1316	0.4566	1.5664		
GREEK DRACHMA	3.9861	0.7629	0.7687	7.4907	7.3357	0.7755	9.3595	0.5691	1.9400		
CYPRUS POUND	1.9774	0.5172	0.5280	5.1453	5.0388	0.5327	6.3593	0.5691	12.1332		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	17.1373	3.2347	3.3025	32.1820	31.5141	3.3317	40.0441	3.3952	1.5142		
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1387	0.4037	0.4121	4.0780	3.9329	0.4158	4.9924	0.4442	1.5142		
EURO	1.2477	0.2355	0.2404	2.3430	2.2945	0.2426	2.9126	0.2592	0.8834		

CURRENCY	US DOLLAR	GB POUND	EURO	YEN	DEUTSCHE MARK	FRANC	SWITZERLAND FRANC	GB POUND	US DOLLAR	ACCESS	US DOLLAR
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.6384	0.5788	0.7089	0.1729	0.8913	0.5146	5.8571	1.1320		
GERMAN MARK	0.6104	1.0000	0.3533	0.4333	0.1055	0.5440	0.3141	3.5748	0.6809		
SWITZERLAND FRANC	1.7248	2.6255	1.0000	1.2424	0.2962	1.1700	0.8875	1.0101	1.6552		
ITALY YEN *	1.4085	2.3078	0.6188	1.0000	0.2435	1.2557	0.7249	0.5943	1.5643		
FRANCE FRANC	5.7639	9.4764	3.3538	4.1062	0.9000	5.1550	2.5768	3.3374	6.5474		
ITALY LIRA*	17.0732	27.5727	5.9000	12.1207	2.9515	15.2167	8.7864	1.0000	19.3298		
BELGIAN FRANC	35.3700	58.2778	20.8255	25.2200	6.1498	31.7023	18.3082	20.3382	40.2652		
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.5264	2.5500	0.8025	1.1048	0.2691	1.3872	0.8013	0.9162	1.7619		
GREEK DRACHMA	2.8243	4.6273	1.5377	2.0050	0.4983	2.5172	1.4353	1.8423	3.1871		
CYPRUS POUND	1.9400	3.1765	1.1248	1.3723	0.3354	1.7281	0.9894	1.1363	1.7249		
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	12.1332	19.8791	7.0356	8.6137	2.0577	10.8138	6.2442	7.1689	15.2240		
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5142	2.4802	0.8780	0.9793	0.2818	1.3495	0.7873	0.8741	1.0000		
EURO	0.8834	1.4473	0.5122	0.6271	0.1527	0.7873	0.4546	0.5741			

### MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR

NOTE: NEITHER ACCESS NOR THE PUBLISHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ERRORS OR MISTAKES

DEPUTY INTEREST RATES

CURRENCY	1 M	3 M	6 M	1 YEAR	CSIA
US DOLLAR	4.5313	4.5902	4.6202	4.6200	1.1522
GERMAN MARK	5.7620	5.5602	5.2000	5.2000	0.4122
SWITZERLAND FRANC	5.0108	5.0108	5.2000	5.0108	0.50

## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Reestimation of annual rent value of buildings, lands will be conducted from beginning of next year

\*\* THE MINISTRY of Finance is striving to fulfil the decision of the Cabinet which approved conducting a reestimation of the net value of annual rent of buildings and lands within the boundaries of municipalities in all governorates starting the beginning of next year, the ministry's secretary general has announced.

Secretary General Ra'fat Alami said this measure will be carried out in light of the many changes which occurred on buildings and lands as a result of construction expansion and the setting up of new municipalities. Consequently, he added, the rent value for residential buildings varies and makes a reestimation necessary.

### Customs department improves efficiency by raising revenue to JD718 million

\*\* REVENUE FROM customs reached JD718 million last year, JD40 million or six per cent more than the amount recorded in 1997, said Nazmi Al Abdallah, the director general of the Department of Customs. He attributed this unexpected rise to improved efficiency at the department especially when imports have noticeably declined and no new fees were levied.

The largest portion of the revenue came from the sales tax and customs fines for a total of JD640.5 million, 10 per cent more than the JD580 million

achieved equality between all taxpayers in the society. The latest comprehensive reestimation took place in 1984.

Alami said the most advanced administrative and technical methods will be used in this process in addition to computers noting that the ministry will be training the committees which will be taking part in the reestimation task. Furthermore, the ministry will be taking all the steps to ensure that the process will be conducted smoothly, quickly and accurately to be able to complete the job within the specified period estimated to last for about 16 months (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i).

revenue registered in 1997.

Al Abdallah said the department will be setting up a directorate for "value and combating commercial cheating" to follow-up on prices of goods and to analyse them. The outcome will then be forwarded to customs centres which, in light of available information, will either extend or refuse to provide the facilities based on the behaviour of those who deal with the department and the extent of their abiding with the laws and regulations.

### ASTROSCOPIC FORECAST

#### FORECAST FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Everybody seems to want to tell you what to do today, and you ought to listen. It looks like they have excellent ideas. They can also support you with a plan you've already got going. Go ahead and pass the ball to the others around you who can help. They'll be glad to do that, and it'll make your life a lot easier.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) The work that's been piling up can't be put off any longer. Look at the bright side. Something you're doing today could be like money in the bank. It might actually be money in the bank. You don't get to spend it now, but it's nice to know it's there and growing.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Somebody you thought you knew very well could surprise you today, and this surprise is a good one. Perhaps you could set up a little surprise of your own. What does your sweetheart really like? Dinner and a show? Or a Thursday night? Why not? Life can be a daring adventure, but it's up to you to make it happen.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 22) If you can scrape the money together, you could make a good deal on a household item. Somebody else's dilemma could be your lucky break. If you're there with cash in hand, you could get it for pennies on the dollar. A little sleuthing is required. Start by letting people know all the things on your wish list.

**LEO:** (July 23 to August 22) People may not think of you as the intellectual type, but sometimes you are, and this is one of those days. By doing a little reading on your own, you could finally understand what an expert is talking about. If you just get to where you can carry on a conversation with folks in the know, your own expertise will grow much more quickly.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) You love to be of service to other people. You live your life so that other people can be happy, wealthy, healthy and even wise, but it wouldn't really be too wise of you to do that today — not if you still have to keep body and soul together. Go ahead and let yourself be generally rewarded for your efforts.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Today, you'll be able to talk people into doing just about whatever you want. But take care. The same is true the other way around, too. In other words, the person

you love and admire will be able to talk you into just about anything. Set a private place so you can follow through on those ideas.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) People will be in the mood to talk today. With a few leading questions, you should be able to find out whatever you want to know, and then some. Your local neighbourhood stool pigeons will be rating on everybody else. Now that you know that's likely to happen, show a little caution. Somebody out there might be rating on you.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Your friends are coming up with great ideas today, and they'd love to help with whatever projects you've got going. So let them in on your predicaments, as well as your joys and successes. One of them will come up with just the idea you've been looking for. It's always easier to figure out somebody else's dilemma.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 19) Looks like people are yammering at you to produce results quickly. Take care not to get reckless. Now that you've put the safety precautions in, go ahead and race full speed ahead to accomplish your goals. If you're smart, you can actually generate more profits with less work, but to do it, you'll have to use your secret weapon.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 18) You're always looking for ways to stretch your imagination, and you're always seeking new horizons to conquer, especially intellectual horizons. You wouldn't mind travelling a little today, either. You just want to stretch your legs and your mind, and everything else. Don't go too far today, unless you can get tomorrow off as well.

**PISCES:** (February 19 to March 20) Looks like your love and maybe a little of your money could bring out the best in others. Do it in a way that encourages them to be strong and not dependent on you. A contribution you make could multiply exponentially. Don't make an investment that makes you feel good. Make an investment that produces results.

Birthstone of February:  
Amethyst — Onyx

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### Goodyear allies with Sumitomo Rubber

NEW YORK (R) — Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Co. said Wednesday it was entering a global alliance with Japan's Sumitomo Rubber Industries Ltd. and laying off as many as 2,800 people or three per cent of Goodyear's workers, in a major overhaul aimed at making it the world's leading tire maker.

Goodyear also reported that fourth-quarter net income rose to \$122 million from \$2 million a year ago, easily beating Wall Street expectations. Worldwide sales slipped to \$3.2 billion in the quarter from \$3.3 billion the year before, the Akron, Ohio-based company said.

Goodyear shares rose \$2.125 to \$52.375 in morning trade on the New York Stock Exchange.

The global alliance, based on a memorandum of understanding signed by Sam Gibara, chairman, chief executive and president of Goodyear, and Naoto Saito, president of Sumitomo Rubber, is subject to approval by each company's board of directors.

To demonstrate both parties' commitment to the overall relationship, establishment of a cross-shareholding is planned.

Goodyear plans to acquire a 10 per cent interest in Sumitomo Rubber and the Kobe-based company plans to acquire an equivalent dollar value of Goodyear shares. The U.S. tire giant said it will make a balancing cash payment of \$936 million to Sumitomo when the joint ventures are in effect.

The transaction will be immediately accretive to Goodyear as earnings per share, the company said. In addition, cost improvement and rationalisation will add a combined estimated \$300 million-\$350 million to the profits of the joint ventures during the next three years, and Goodyear sees total annual sales increasing by \$2.5 billion.

In Japan, Sumitomo Rubber will own 75 per cent of two joint ventures and Goodyear will own 25 per cent. Voting rights will be shared 70-30.

Goodyear said the reorganisation, which involves closing its plant in Gadsden, Alabama, by the end of the year and laying off 2,500-2,800 workers, would yield \$100 million-\$150 million in savings. Goodyear said it sees one-time reorganisation costs also of \$100 million-\$150 million.

Its alliance with Sumitomo and sweeping reorganisation come in response to the economic volatility in Latin America, the on-going Asian economic flu and inefficient operations in North America.

To cut costs, Goodyear said it will end tire manufacturing operations at its plant in Gadsden, which dates back to 1929 and is one of its five largest worldwide.

The company said it would shut the plant's tire manufacturing by the end of the year, but workers will continue to mix rubber to be used at other sites. Goodyear will transfer production from its Gadsden plant to other U.S. plants that operate seven days a week at full capacity.

### French company awarded contract to manage Amman's water sector

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — The government recently announced that it has awarded a \$55 million contract to a French firm to manage Amman's water and wastewater network.

Water and Energy Minister Hani Mulki said the French company, Lyonnaise des Eaux, the water division of Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux Group, will also train Jordanians in the management of this important sector.

The 51-month contract will provide water and wastewater management and maintenance to the Greater Amman Municipality. The company's objective is to improve water distribution by

reducing leaks and other losses in the existing water network.

Illegal use of water reportedly costs the treasury JD15 million in losses every year. The government estimates that more than 50 per cent of water intended for both drinking and irrigation purposes.

The Greater Amman Municipality represents 45 per cent of the country's total drinking water consumption.

The World Bank has granted a \$55 million loan for the duration of the contract to cover capital investments to rehabilitate existing water plants and networks and restructure the water services.

Jordan's population is expected to increase from 5.3 million in 2000 to more than

eight million by 2020 — a factor which will severely strain the country's water resources.

To prevent water shortage, the government is looking for more efficient use of water for both drinking and irrigation purposes.

The Greater Amman Municipality represents 45 per cent of the country's total drinking water consumption.

The Disi-Amman conveyance system will be transferred to the government after 20 years. It will entail drilling wells, building a pumping station and a 325-kilometre water pipeline from the Disi aquifer to the capital for the delivery of 100 million cubic metres by 2005.

### VACANCY NOTICE UNICEF BAGHDAD, IRAQ ASSIST. PROJECT OFFICER (NUTRITION) GRADE-NOB

#### Purpose:

Under the supervision of Project Officer Health/Nutrition, contribute to NUTRITION programme design and implementation, evaluation of programme/project activities, data analysis and progress reporting. Ensure proper management, distribution and utilisation of UNICEF provided inputs, monitor changes in nutritional status of women and children and effective coverage of services. The programme is supported by UNICEF and carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other related ministries.

#### Minimum Requirements:

- University degree in medical or nursing science with nutrition related postgraduate studies.
- Communication, analytical and training skills.
- Ability to work in an international and multicultural environment.
- Two years progressively responsible experience in public health and nutrition programme design, administration, monitoring and evaluation.
- Fluent in English and Arabic (Written and spoken)
- Knowledge of computer applications such as database, spreadsheet, Word processing and Windows required.

Only Iraqi Nationals can apply quoting Post No. IRQ99017.  
Applications must be received by 15 February 1999  
To: Asst. Admin/Personnel Officer, UNICEF Amman  
P.O. Box 840028, Amman 11184, Jordan.

### VACANCY NOTICE UNICEF BAGHDAD, IRAQ INFORMATION OFFICER GRADE-NOC

#### Purpose:

Under the guidance of Section Chief (Communication Officer) responsible for development, planning, implementation and monitoring of information and communication strategies, to support the country programme in Iraq. It aims to improve the national capacity to plan, implement and evaluate research-based communication approaches and participatory methodologies for the mobilisation of individual action for children's rights.

#### Minimum Requirements:

- Advanced university degree in information/communication.
- Ten years of experience in the relevant field of which 5 years in Emergency environment.
- Experience with UN/UNICEF an advantage.
- Ability to write clearly and concisely on the technical aspects of communication/information.
- Negotiating skills with all types and levels, from community to senior government.
- Proven ability to conceptualise, innovate, plan and execute ideas.
- Ability to supervise and direct staff.
- Strong analytical skills.
- Good knowledge of computer management and applications.
- Training skills desirable.
- Fluency in English and Arabic.

Only Iraqi Nationals can apply quoting Post No. 11862  
Applications must be received by 10 February 1999  
To: Asst. Admin/Personnel Officer, UNICEF Amman  
P.O. Box 840028, Amman 11184, Jordan.

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## Little support for Hoddle except from faith-healer

LONDON (R) — Sacked England coach Glenn Hoddle received scant sympathy on Wednesday and faith-healer Eileen Dwyer blamed the media for his dismissal.

Hoddle, a devout Christian who believes in reincarnation, was forced to stand down on Tuesday for saying disabled people were being punished for the sins of a previous life.

A few hours before his fate was decided by the Football Association (F.A.), Hoddle's daughter Zara faxed a letter to the BBC pleading for understanding.

"If you would just take time to listen to what his explanation is then maybe you would understand a bit more. So, please consider it from my dad's point of view and hopefully everything will be back to normal soon," she wrote.

Hoddle told the Mirror newspaper: "I had managed to hold myself together throughout all this but that was the last straw."

"Someone told me Zara had written this note and I just started to cry." The Mirror was one of the few newspapers to offer any sympathy or support for the former England manager.

The Mirror felt on balance that Glenn Hoddle should be allowed to remain in his job, but he was barred from discussing his beliefs in public again," it said in an editorial.

The only other major backing for Hoddle came from Dwyer, Hoddle's spiritual guru.

"It's a witch-hunt. The media were only interested in getting him out and they succeeded," she said in a television interview. "It would

have been impossible for him to carry on because of the media." She vowed to continue fighting on Hoddle's behalf, saying she had an "axe to grind".

The Times, which sparked the row by publishing the interview in

without him." "He had lost the support without which is was impossible to be the figurehead for the national game," The Times said in an editorial.

"He had failed to separate his rights of free speech from his duties

to quit, commented: "There could hardly have been a more shameful exit."

"Glenn Hoddle wasn't man enough to resign. He had to be booted out kicking and screaming, threatening to sue and blaming the media. Like a sent-off player arguing all the way to the touchline, he just made it worse." As Hoddle retreated from public view, the search began for a long-term successor to a job considered one of sport's most poisoned of chalices.

Ex-Leeds manager Howard Wilkinson, the F.A.'s technical director, will be in charge for next week's friendly game with world champions France.

Middlesbrough's Bryan Robson, Kevin Keegan of Fulham, Aston Villa's John Gregory and Hoddle's predecessor, Terry Venables, have all been floated as permanent successors.

However Keegan, the former England captain, ruled himself out on Wednesday, saying it was "the wrong time" for him and he wanted to stay with Fulham. Robson has already said he did not believe he had the experience for the job.

Arsene Wenger of Arsenal and Liverpool's Gerard Houllier have also been mentioned and on Wednesday the F.A.'s acting chief executive David Davies did not rule out the possibility of a foreign coach.

He told BBC TV there would be widespread consultations. "We will move as quickly as possible to get the best possible person," he said.

## Charlton sends out English SOS to foreign coaches

LONDON (AFP) — Former England great Sir Bobby Charlton sent out a save-our-soccer SOS to foreign coaches on Wednesday following the ousting of Glenn Hoddle.

Charlton argued the Football Association (F.A.) should break with tradition and appoint the best coach available, regardless of nationality.

The F.A. appeared to agree, saying it would not rule out a foreigner in the post for the first time.

"There's nothing wrong with appointing someone who is not English," Charlton said. "All football fans in this country want to be proud of their football team and to see it win."

Hoddle's contract was terminated on Tuesday after he was quoted in The Times newspaper last week implying that disabled people were being punished for sins committed in a previous life. He said he had been misrepresented.

Charlton, a member of England's 1966 World Cup winning side, added: "The appointment should be made on merit."

Earlier David Davies, the English governing body's boss, asked if the job would be reserved for an Englishman, told BBC radio: "The only thing we are looking for is the best person for the job."

"I would not rule anything out in that direction."

Leading English contenders Bryan Robson and Kevin Keegan have already ruled themselves out of the race, and there appears to be no apparent heir waiting in the wings.

Many commentators have said the job is so high-pressure and English expectations so high that the role is almost impossible to enjoy, while others have pointed to the dearth of top home-grown candidates.

Howard Wilkinson, the former manager of English Premier side Leeds, has taken over as caretaker manager.

Charlton, a member of England's 1966 World Cup

dates have also been ruled out. Manchester United chairman Martin Edwards on Tuesday ruled Alex Ferguson out to replace Hoddle.

Liverpool's French boss Gerard Houllier also said he would not apply, saying: "It is out of the question."

Former England midfielder David Platt is another English name which has been thrust forward.

His departure as supervisor with Italian club Sampdoria on Tuesday coincided with Hoddle's sacking. Already there has been speculation that Platt could link up with Wilkinson.

Wilkinson is the only Englishman to manage a club side to the English Premiership title this decade.

Last year's championship was won by Arsenal, under Frenchman Arsene Wenger. Scotsmen Ferguson, George Graham and Kenny Dalglish have also taken sides to the Premiership title in the 1990s.

Several top foreign candi-

## Sammer on way back — Vogts

BONN (AFP) — Former European player of the year Matthias Sammer is poised to return to football after a year on the sidelines with injury. former German national coach Berti Vogts claimed in Sport-Bild paper. Vogts made the claim after a phone call with the sweeper who starred in his country's 1996 European Nations Cup victory in England.

## Doping summit quickly reverts to minimum programme to keep semblance of unity

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — IOC officials conceded Wednesday the world doping summit would fail to finalize the creation of an international anti-drug agency or impose uniform minimum sanctions.

The inability to solve those two key issues ripped the heart out of the conference and left the IOC struggling to come to any concrete resolutions by the end of the meeting Thursday.

"Perhaps we can agree on the principle of an agency but at the end of the meeting you will not have an agency decided in detail," IOC drug chief Prince Alexandre de Merode said after two days of bitter dispute over who should lead the body.

"It is clear that it needs more study," de Merode said, saying the issue could not be settled by Thursday's end of the meeting.

The goal of setting a mandatory minimum two-year sanction for serious drug offenses also faded under the pressure of major sports federations, who argued such bans would inevitably be struck down by civil courts.

The world soccer federation FIFA insisted it would never bow to a two-year sanction. The IOC relented.

"My response to FIFA is 'yes,'" said Judge Koba Mbaya, who headed an IOC group on the sanctions issue. He said FIFA would be allowed to apply suspensions under two years.

The IOC had threatened last year to kick federations out of the Olympics if they refused to back the proposal of a two-year ban.

Cycling had also questioned the wisdom of a two-year sanction.

Track chief Primo Nebiolo, representing the 28 Summer Olympic federations, offered a compromise proposal under which federations would be able to cite "exceptional circumstances" in applying bans of less than two years.

Marc Hodler, leader of the seven winter sports federations, backed Nebiolo's proposal.

The move to soften the two-year sanction upset leading athletes, including former

Olympic champions Johann Olav Koss and Sebastian Coe.

"We have to hold our nerve, we have to hold the line," Coe, the British 1,500-metre runner, said.

Germany's Roland Baar, a member of the IOC's athletes committee, suggested soccer should be kicked out of the Olympics if it can't accept a two-year sanction.

"If soccer, or whoever, cannot accept the IOC rules, then they cannot be part of the IOC. It's a very simple thing," Baar said.

Meanwhile, finger pointing and raw criticism continued to dominate the meeting as much as calls for a unified stance on doping.

European delegates lashed out at the United States for making proposals for thorough reform, saying it was seeking the high moral ground while it was unable to control the doping issue at home.

"They should not take the others for being naive and small people," said French Olympic Committee president Henri Serdouard. "They should stop giving us lessons. They want to appear whiter than white."

Former Olympic middle-distance champion Coe also criticized the U.S. position.

"I say to those countries you can have a contribution to make to the debate, but come to the table after you have first cleared your own backyard," he said.

Coé, gold medalist in the 1,500 meters at the 1980 and 1984 Olympics, cited the case of U.S. sprinter Dennis Mitchell. Coe noted that Mitchell escaped a doping ban on grounds that his positive test for testosterone was the result of having sex and drinking beer the night before.

"This stretches confidence and credibility to the breaking point," Coe said.

Even Hein Verbruggen, head of the world cycling federation (UCI), joined the criticism even though his sport has been widely discredited after the doping scandals at the Tour de France last July.

The IOC was scrambling to save its highly-touted world conference from failure on other fronts, seeking to revise

some of its maligned proposals.

"They were projects, not decisions," said de Merode, adding compromises would be drafted during Wednesday's session.

Hopes that the doping conference would restore some status to the IOC were dashed almost as soon as the meeting opened.

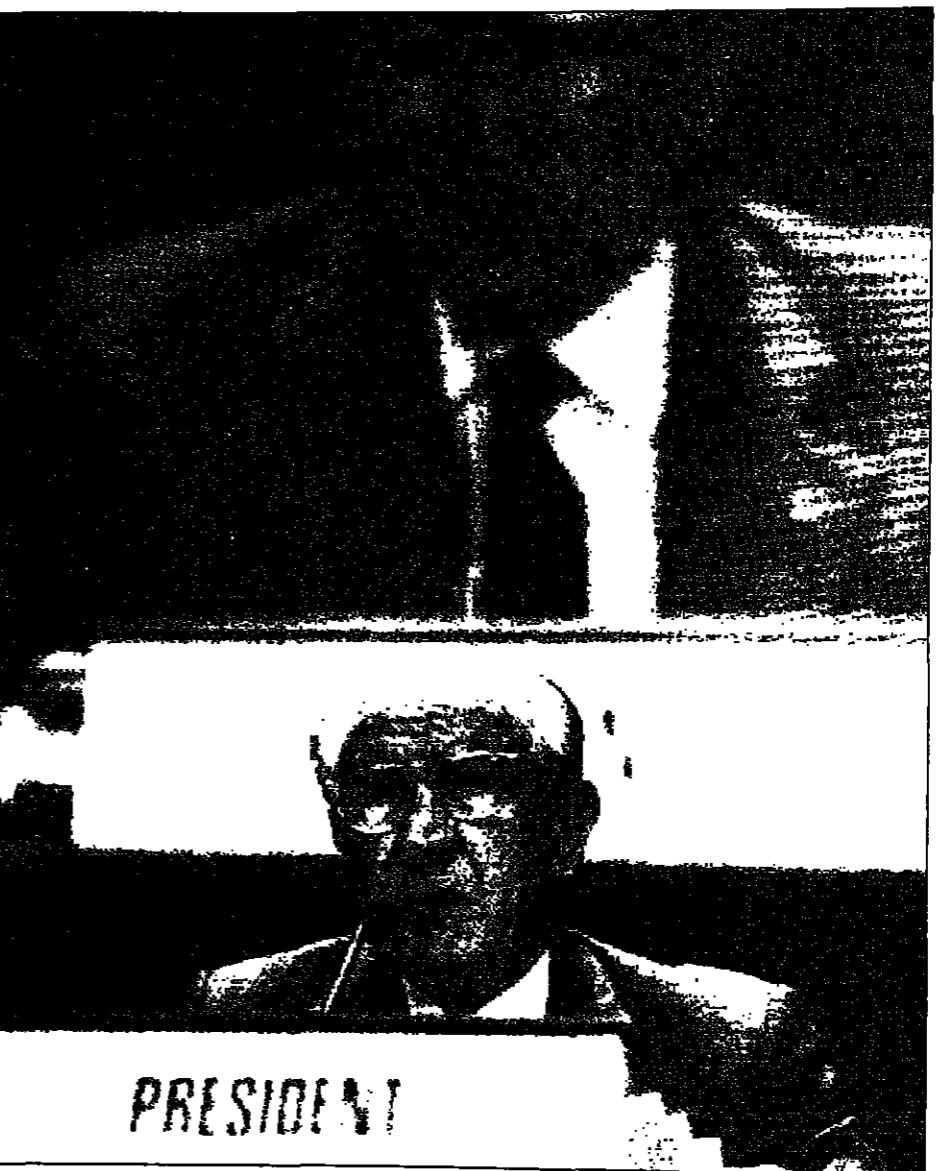
Some criticised the conference for being nothing more than a talk shop where little could be

achieved.

"We are the biggest federation with 240 million members and we get three minutes to talk," said FIFA medical chief Michel D'Hooghe. "This is ridiculous."

The agency to coordinate random drug testing and other doping control matters around the globe was slipping from the IOC's grasp.

The United States and the 15-



International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Juan Antonio Samaranch speaks at the opening session on the second day of the IOC World Conference on Doping in Sport at the Palais de Beaulieu in Lausanne, Feb. 3. Plans for IOC boss Samaranch to run an international anti-doping agency appear to have been scuttled by the Salt Lake City corruption probe. Delegates at the three-day conference in Lausanne are instead demanding that someone outside the IOC take charge to ensure the agency's independence. (AP photo)

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An athlete races to the finish line in the Men's Alpine Ski Event of the Asian Winter Games in Yongpyong Feb. 3. The eight-day long Winter Games comprises 43 events in seven sports with 1300 athletes, referees, officials and judges from 16 Asian countries (Reuters photo)

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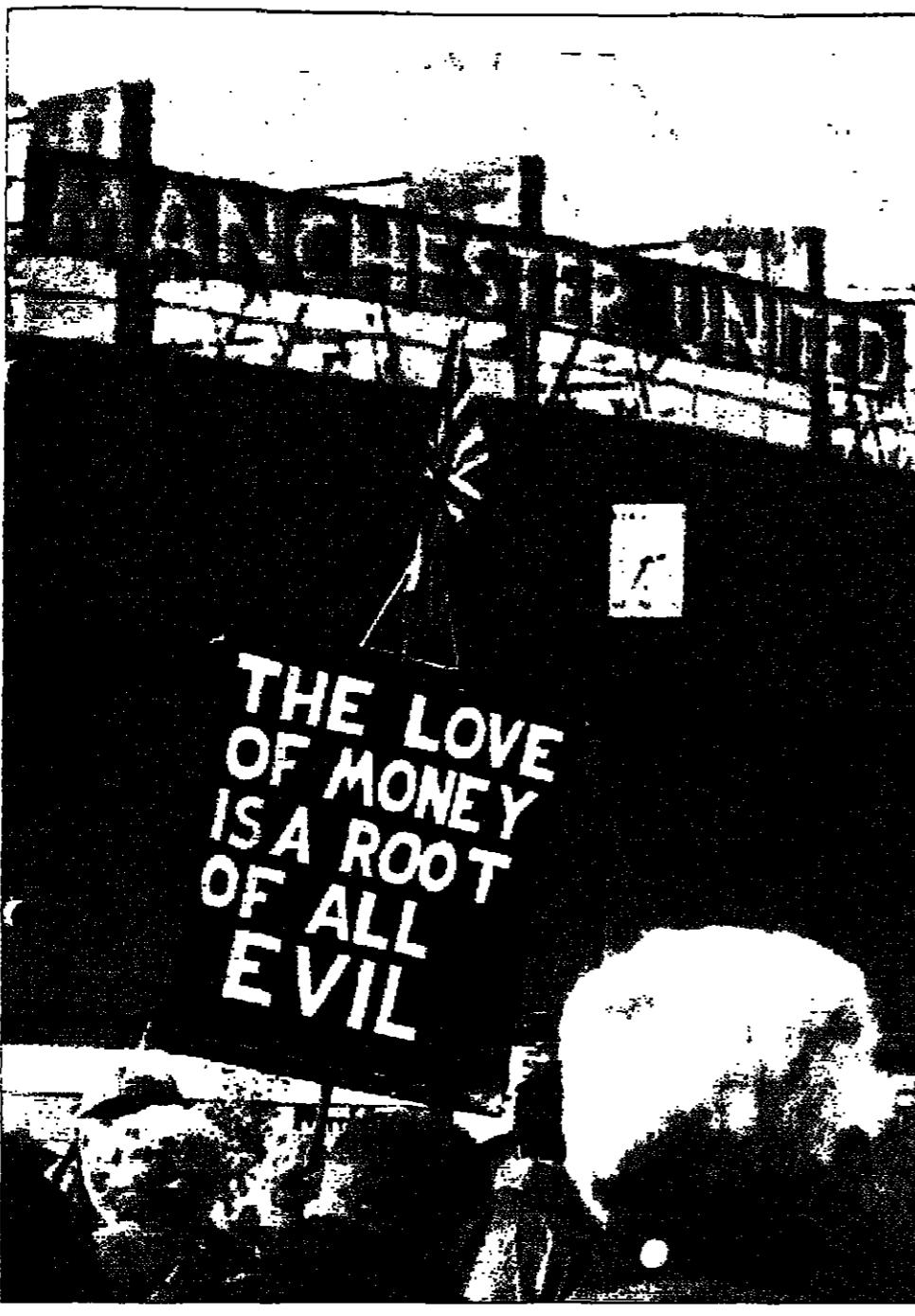
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# Sports

## Manchester United is the richest club — survey



Manchester United is the world's richest soccer club, dwarfing the earnings power of its closest rivals in the Spanish and Italian soccer elite by a clear 30 million pounds (\$49.11 million), according to a survey published February 3. The English club generated 89.7 million pounds (\$146.8 million) in income from all sources in 1997. A protestor holds a placard outside United's Old Trafford stadium in this September 12 1998 file photo, during the week after the BSkyB corporation announced a take-over bid for Manchester United plc (Reuters photo)

LONDON (R) — Manchester United is the world's richest football club, dwarfing the earnings power of its closest rivals in the Spanish and Italian soccer elite by a clear 30 million pounds (\$49.11 million), according to a survey published on Wednesday.

The English club generated 89.7 million pounds (\$146.8 million) in income from all sources in 1997, bolstered by shrewd marketing of perhaps the most famous "brand" in the game, said the survey by accountants Deloitte and Touche, who ranked clubs by their turnover for the season ending in 1997.

Of the top 20 world clubs, only Flamengo of Brazil in 11th place was non-European and most came from the lucrative Italian, Spanish and English leagues which, thanks to satellite TV and some of the world's best players, enjoy a global following.

Matt Tench, the editor of U.K. football magazine FourFourTwo, said Manchester United's marketing power, which allows it to generate more income from commercial activities than gate receipts, was quite remarkable.

"It's a mark of Manchester United's success that they can sell replica shirts to kids in the Far East who have never been anywhere near Manchester," he said.

Juventus, with a turnover of 53.2 million pounds (\$87.09 million), was the richest Italian club, in fourth place behind Spanish giants Barcelona, 58.9 million (\$96.43 million), and Real Madrid, 55.7 million

### Mason out for season with elbow injury

FORT MILL, South Carolina (AP) — Already faced with playing as many as 20 games without leading scorer Glen Rice, the Charlotte Hornets learned Tuesday night that top rebounder Anthony Mason will miss the entire season.

Mason left practice Monday with what was originally diagnosed as a hyperextended right elbow. When the injury did not respond to initial treatment, he was sent Tuesday for magnetic resonance imaging test, which showed a ruptured biceps tendon.

Surgery is being recommended to repair the damage, and it likely will take 4-6

months for rehabilitation, said Dr. Glenn Perry, the Hornets' lead physician.

New center Derrick Coleman rolled his eyes when asked about Charlotte's chances of contending in the Eastern Conference without Mason and Rice, who is recovering from elbow surgery.

"There goes the season," Coleman said. "It's going to be tough. I was looking forward to getting out there and playing with those guys."

Coleman, signed at the start of camp, was expected to play a complementary role on a team that advanced to the Eastern

Conference semifinals last season largely on the strength of Rice and Mason.

But Rice, who was sixth in the National Basketball Association last season with a scoring average of 22.3 points, underwent an arthroscopic clean-out procedure late last month after a bone chip was discovered in his right elbow. He could miss the first five weeks of the season.

Mason, who last season averaged 12.8 points and was seventh in the league with a rebound average of 10.2, hyperextended his elbow while battling through a pick in practice Monday.

## Departed stars leave Bulls in dismal state

WASHINGTON (AP) — Their dynasty demolished, the Chicago Bulls will open the National Basketball Association season Friday looking to the distant future with little chance of a second title in nine years.

Michael Jordan retired. Phil Jackson stepped down as coach. Scottie Pippen was traded to Houston. Steve Kerr went to San Antonio. Australian center Luc Longley went to Phoenix. Dennis Rodman is not coming back.

Even hope has hit the road.

"When you have as many new guys as we have, you understand it's going to be an adjustment," new Chicago coach Tim Floyd said. "You have to think long term. You want young players to have carry over into next year. This year being a playoff team we didn't feel that was important."

Owner Jerry Reinsdorf and general manager Jerry Krause, blamed in part for pushing out Jackson and Jordan, will now have the chance to prove it was their management truly behind the Bulls' brilliance.

"They decided the best route to get back to a championship was to completely rebuild," Floyd said. "I have to believe in them."

Ironically, the Bulls open against Utah, the same team Jordan and company defeated in last year's final and a team with almost everyone returning for back-to-back trips to the NBA Finals.

"You've got to be thinking, 'What the heck did I do to deserve this?'" Floyd said. "It's good from one aspect. It will allow us to identify our weaknesses."

Floyd will make his pro debut in a season shortened to 50 games with Toni Kukoc and newcomer Brent Barry as the top building blocks of a club seemingly doomed to live in the shadow of faded

glory. "If there ever was a good time to be bad, this is it," Chicago center Bill Wennington said. "You won't be able to be as bad as long as you would otherwise."

It might just seem like an eternity, warn rival NBA coaches.

"It's not going to be a fun atmosphere," Milwaukee coach George Karl said. "They have been winning for a long time. It will be tough."

"They could have looked at replacing Michael with somebody who could help," Portland coach Mike Dunleavy said. "Last time they lost him they still won 55 games. That's a lot."

"I wish they had stayed together because a true champion wants to go through the best," New Jersey coach John Calipari said. "The opportunity to go against some of the best players ever was an exciting challenge."

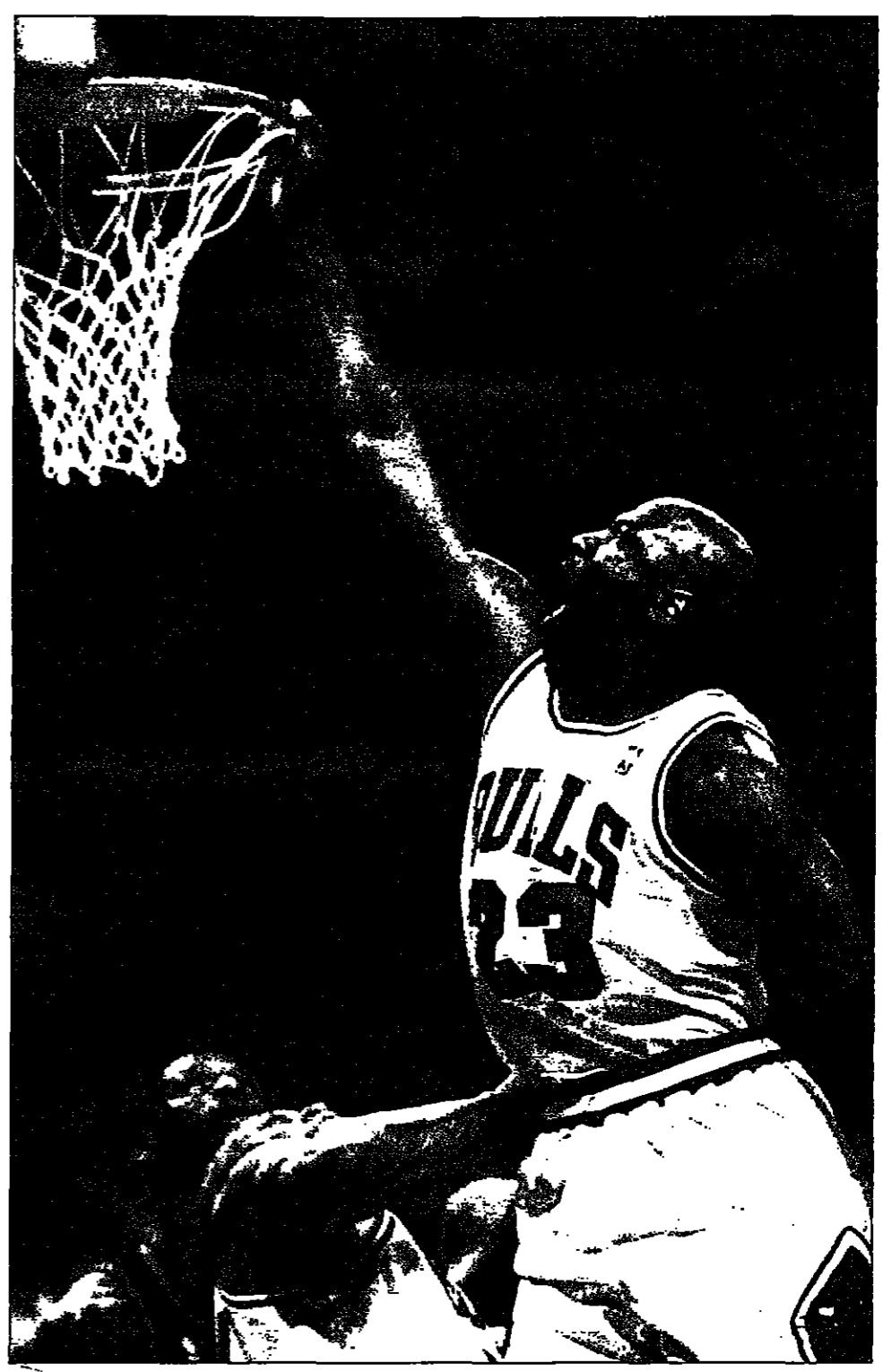
Rivals who cannot avenge themselves against a championship team scattered to the winds in the wake of Jordan's retirement might take revenge on whatever hapless folks happen to be filling Bulls jerseys.

"Michael and Scottie aren't in those uniforms anymore," Floyd said. "The incentive to put it to the Bulls may not be there 30 or 40 games into the season. But I'm sure it will be there early on."

"If the experts are right who have predicted doom for the Bulls, you would rather go through that in a shorter season. I'm not ready at this point to sell our team out and say we can't win some games."

But Calipari, who like Floyd went from the college coaching ranks to the NBA level, had some words of warning for Floyd:

"It's totally different. I mentioned that to Tim," Calipari said. "You can't



Michael Jordan (File photo)

prepare for it. You have to go through it. I called (college) my past life. I did my homework, but until you are in battle, you don't know how they are going to adjust to what you try to do. Everything was new.

"And the anxiety. Wow. It's like you're running down an alley that's pitch black and you know a wall is coming up but you don't know where."

## Falcons want to show they're no one-year wonder

ATLANTA (AP) — Now comes the tough part for the Atlanta Falcons.

Sure, it was quite an accomplishment to make the Super Bowl for the first time in 33 years. Obviously, the "Dirty Birds" went a long way toward restoring the city's passion for pro football with their catchy nickname and funky dance steps.

But the thing that still eludes this franchise is consistent success.

The Falcons have never had back-to-back winning seasons, a point noted quite often by coach Dan Reeves even as he was guiding Atlanta to the NFC championship.

"We have an awful lot of things to be proud of," Reeves said, after an extraordinary season ended with a 34-19 loss to the Denver Broncos. "We've come an awful long ways. What we're trying to do now is fight for home-field advantage next year." No team has ever played the

National Football League title game on its home field. Next year, the Falcons have a chance to be the first when the Super Bowl comes to the Georgia Dome.

Atlanta took care of its first piece of offseason business Tuesday, making five players available to the Cleveland Browns for the expansion

draft: safety Chris Bayne, running back Harold Green, tight end Ed Smith, linebacker Ben Talley and offensive lineman Dave Widell.

Bayne, Green and Widell spent much of the season on the inactive list, while Smith and Talley had limited roles as backups.

In 1999, the Falcons can expect

heightened expectations, a tougher schedule and an already long-in-the-tooth team that will be one year older.

The defense, in particular, is starting to take on the look of the "Over The Hill Gang," with five starters who will be 32 years or older by the start of next season. Average age of the entire unit: 30.

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## U.N. orders withdrawal of remaining U.S., British nationals from Iraq

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The United Nations on Wednesday announced the withdrawal of all U.S. and British nationals from Iraq after the Iraqi government failed to provide written safety guarantees.

The announcement was made at a news briefing by U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard, who explained that in the light of an Iraqi threat last month, all but two of the U.S. and British nationals working in Iraq had already been pulled out in recent weeks.

The two remaining U.S. nationals, who are now to leave Baghdad, are the secretary of U.N. envoy Prakash Shah and the deputy head of a U.N. agency, Eckhard said. All British citizens have already been withdrawn, he added.

The U.N. decision came amid an escalation of inci-

dents between the United States and Baghdad over U.S. and British-patrolled no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq.

The decision stems from an official Iraqi warning on Jan. 4 that in the light of U.S. and British air strikes on Iraq in December, the government was no longer able to guarantee the security of U.S. and British nationals in the country.

U.N. weapons inspectors were pulled out of Iraq just before the air strikes last month.

A handful of U.S. and British nationals meanwhile worked with the 400-strong contingent of humanitarian workers in Iraq, who are implementing an oil-for-food programme with sanctions-hit Baghdad.

Eckhard said that following the Jan. 4 aide-memoire from Baghdad, Iraqi repre-

sentatives in the Iraqi capital and in New York had made "numerous verbal requests" for U.S. and British nationals to leave.

Although Iraq said that three U.S. citizens would be allowed to leave, U.N. security coordinator Benon Sevan "did not accept that security considerations could be applied selectively."

Eckhard said that as Iraq could not dictate the terms on which U.N. workers are sent to Baghdad, Sevan "recommended to the [U.N.] secretary general that all U.S. and U.K. nationals should leave the country as a matter of principle."

Secretary General Kofi Annan "accepted that recommendation," Eckhard said.

Sevan is also the official in charge of implementing the oil-for-food programme.



BAD LUCK? TRY TOSSING BEANS: Kindergarten students Wednesday throw roasted soya beans to 'demons,' actually their teachers in legendary costumes, as they participate in the annual bean-tossing ceremony at Tokyo's Sensoji Temple. Marking the approach of spring in the lunar calendar, Japanese traditionally throw beans in a gesture to beat bad luck and illness and to invite good health and happiness (AP photo)

## Arafat advisor roughed up by Israeli extremists

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Ahmad Tibi, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's political advisor, said Wednesday that he had been insulted, spat on and roughed up by right-wing Israeli extremists during a court appearance here.

Tibi, an Arab-Israeli, told AFP that the incident occurred Wednesday in a Jerusalem courtroom where he appeared to answer charges that he insulted an Israeli border guard a year ago.

A half-dozen right-wing Israeli activists who were waiting for him in court called him a "Naz" and other insults, spat on him and scratched his neck, Tibi said.

His bodyguards tried to protect him as police stood by, Tibi said. None of the right-wingers close to the banned Kach movement was arrested.

"I was physically attacked

and the policemen did nothing," the Arafat advisor said. "I have filed a complaint. This is scandalous. How can extremists be allowed into a courtroom and the police dis-appear here."

One of those accused of attacking Tibi, Noam Federman, who has carried out a number of assaults on Arabs in the past, said Tibi was treated in "the best Kahan tradition," a reference to the assassinated founder of the anti-Arab Kach movement, Meir Kahan.

Tibi is accused of insulting a border guard from Israel's Druze community who wanted to search his car at a Jerusalem checkpoint. He allegedly told the policeman, "my shoes are cleaner than you."

Tibi has played an important role as an intermediary between Israel and the Palestinians since the launch of the peace process in 1993.

## U.S. envoy warned against dangers of Iraq plans

DUBAI (AFP) — A top U.S. envoy wrapped up a topless Saddam Hussein tour of the Gulf on Wednesday with a warning ringing in his ears of grave dangers posed by the American plot against Baghdad.

And in the Iraqi capital itself, a senior official dubbed the mission by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk a "failure."

Indyk's five-nation swing met a sobering end when the United Arab Emirates (UAE) defence minister pointed out the risks of Washington's much-vaunted policy to overthrow the Iraqi regime.

Sheikh Mohammad Ben Rashid Al Maktoum "voiced his reservations about the American stand," said the official news agency WAM.

"Any political change in Iraq brought about from the outside would lead to division and civil war," he noted.

Indyk left, saying he had forged a Gulf-wide "consensus."

Regional leaders and the United States agreed action

rather than talk was needed against Saddam, he told a press conference Tuesday night.

Leaders here argue strongly that change needs to come from within Iraq and we agree with that," he said.

"They also made clear to us that they prefer that we talk less and do more, and we agreed with that," he said. "Our purpose is to support the people of Iraq in their efforts to change the regime."

The Emirati daily Al Khaleej was equally clear in urging opposition to the U.S. plans which it said were a "dangerous precedent ... a flagrant violation of the U.N. Charter and international resolutions on Iraq which give no one carte blanche to overthrow the Iraqi regime."

Al Khaleej, which is close to the government, urged a unified Arab position "to cut short the United States attempt to fish in murky waters."

Indyk was repeatedly told by Emirati officials "the clear position of the Emirates which

said he was "opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of Iraq and believe that any change should come from the Iraqi people alone," Al Khaleej said.

Publicly, Indyk gave an assurance that "we will not seek to impose our will on Iraq nor will we seek to impose an outside opposition on the Iraqi people."

Most Gulf leaders agreed, he said, over the "continuing danger" Saddam Hussein poses, [and] the need to take care of the basic needs of the Iraqi people while maintaining sanctions."

He said there was also consensus that Saddam "has been significantly weakened and an opportunity does exist" to remove him.

Indyk visited Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman as well as the UAE.

His open calls to oust the Baghdad regime also met resistance in Oman and Qatar where newspapers slammed the campaign.

Sultan Qaboos, who met Indyk late Monday in Muscat, said he was "opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of Iraq and believe that any change should come from the Iraqi people alone," Al Khaleej said.

## 'El Al warned that crashed plane carried dangerous cargo'

THE HAGUE (AFP) — The Israeli airline El Al whose cargo plane crashed in Amsterdam in 1992 immediately warned Dutch authorities that the jet had been carrying dangerous goods, an air traffic controller said on Wednesday.

Stef Koopmans told the parliamentary commission investigating the crash that El Al had telephoned the air traffic controllers at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport shortly after the plane fell from the sky on Oct. 4, 1992, killing 45 people.

They informed Schiphol that the plane was carrying inflammable and poisonous gases, explosives and munitions, Koopmans told the five-member panel.

He based his comments on a recording of the conversation. The cassette containing the information had been filed away in a safe for years and only brought out last month ahead of the hearings on the disaster, the Dutch news agency ANP reported.

Koopmans, director of operations at the airport's air traffic control centre, said that the information had been immediately relayed to Schiphol's management and to Dutch air safety services who were coordinating the rescue services.

The then-Amsterdam mayor Ed van Thijn said he was shocked at the news.

"This is totally new to me. I am baffled," he said.

Van Thijn headed one of the crisis centres on the night of the crash but asserted that rescue services had never been warned of the dangerous cargo on the plane.

"Several times during that evening, I was personally assured that no dangerous

## Yemen accuses Britain of involvement in bomb plot

### Visa privileges for Britons cancelled

DUBAI (AFP) — Yemen's Interior Minister Hussein Arab has accused Britain of involvement in an alleged bomb plot by a group of British Muslims because they held extra passports, in an interview published Wednesday.

"We believe Britain is implicated in this affair," he told the Emirati newspaper Al Khaleej.

"We consider that our British friends are implicated ... and we have let that be known to British officials. Until they clarify this affair, we consider them to be implicated," said Arab.

"Either Britain is implicated in the plan or there's a powerful and influential network which evades the British security services," the minister added.

He said the British suspects in the bomb plot in the southern Yemeni city of Aden held "two British passports in reserve, in addition to their own passports, in case they needed to use them."

"Only the state can provide

by a militant preacher based in London, Abu Hamza Al Masri, whose extradition Sanaa has requested.

"But there has been no reply from the British government," the interior minister complained.

"The British state seems to be adopting an attitude of non-cooperation with Yemen. At the same time, it asks Yemen to free its nationals and denies they are linked to terrorism," he said.

### Ecevit announces anti-Islamist crackdown

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit on Wednesday announced a nationwide crackdown on Islamist activity in a move certain to please the country's powerful and resolutely secular armed forces.

Ecevit, a leftist deeply suspicious of political Islam in officially secular Turkey, told his MPs he would issue a circular the same day instructing the police and judiciary to take legal action against any threats to the secular order.

"Every state is obliged to defend itself... The government, local governors, prosecutors, judges and police

have a duty to protect the state," he said.

Elections are scheduled for April this year and are shaping up into a bitter struggle between the powerful Islamist-based Virtue Party and a handful of fractious secular parties.

Ecevit's phrases echoed documents released last month by the armed forces that said the Islamist movement aimed to subvert Turkey's secular code and said the country was justified in fighting Islamic activism.

The circular set up a central body to coordinate the crackdown and drew particular attention to broadcasting

and restrictions on freedom of speech.

"Activities that abuse or politicise religion will be opposed with determination," state-run Anatolia news agency cited the circular as saying.

Past crackdowns have led to prosecution of politicians and journalists deemed to have encouraged religious militancy by their statements, outlawing of publications and even the closure of parties.

The circular set up a central body to coordinate the crackdown and drew particular attention to broadcasting

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Complaints of radiation 'contamination'

LONDON (AFP) — Sixteen British ex-servicemen who served in the 1991 Gulf War have tested positive for depleted uranium contamination, a veterans' group claimed on Wednesday. The tests were carried out in Canada on samples sent by members of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association. The veterans claim depleted uranium (DU) poisoning, linked to U.S. and British use of depleted uranium ammunition during the Gulf War, is the cause of a variety of illnesses they have suffered since the war against Iraq. Shaun Rustling from Hull, in northern England, who served in the Royal Army Medical Corps, said: "We have all been diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), chronic fatigue and other illnesses." "But our illnesses are not the result of PTSD. You have to look for the underlying illness which is causing these symptoms."

### Israelis for concessions in W. Bank

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A big majority of Jewish Israelis favour further land concessions on the West Bank to achieve peace with the Palestinians, but they are against any sharing of Jerusalem, according to a poll released Wednesday. The survey by the Tel Aviv University peace centre found that 68 per cent of those queried favoured ceding more of the occupied West Bank to Palestinian control. At the same time 84 per cent of Israelis questioned opposed any Israeli withdrawal from Arab east Jerusalem, which was also occupied in 1967 and then illegally annexed by Israel as part of its "eternal capital."

### Bonn will arrest Ocalan on arrival

ANKARA (AFP) — German authorities will arrest fugitive Kurdish rebel Abdullah Ocalan if he sets foot on German soil, German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer said in a newspaper interview Wednesday. "He will be immediately arrested, imprisoned and put on trial. But I cannot say what verdict the court will give. The judiciary in Germany is independent," Fischer told the Turkish liberal daily Milliyet. "We would come up against serious political problems, but the issue would belong to the judiciary and not politics." Fischer said on the possible trial of Ocalan in Germany.

### Former minister acquitted in mafia trial

ISTANBUL (AP) — A former cabinet minister was acquitted Wednesday of charges of aiding and abetting the mob, the Anatolia news agency reported. Eyup Asik resigned from the government in September when television stations broadcast his taped conversations with a leading mafia boss. The scandal eventually led to the collapse of the government of Mesut Yilmaz in November. The court ruled that the conversations did not constitute a crime. The acquittal means Asik can run in the local and parliamentary elections scheduled in April. He is a member of Yilmaz' centre-right Motherland Party. Yilmaz still faces a parliamentary investigation on his ties with the mob.



### Alleged wheelchair bandit arrested

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — San Francisco police have arrested a paraplegic man suspected of being a wheelchair-bound bandit who recently robbed at least three people on the streets of Chinatown. Cuong Tran, 27, was arrested on Monday night and charged with one count of robbery and violation of his probation, police spokesman Sherman Ackerson said on Tuesday. Tran is accused of being the man who wheeled up to his victims, displayed or simulated a semi-automatic weapon, demanded money and fled in the motorised wheelchair. Ackerson said investigators believe Tran, who speaks fluent Cantonese, is a former gang member who was partially paralysed in a gang shooting.

### Brothels to be treated as any other business

AMSTERDAM (R) — The Dutch parliament voted to legalise brothels, swayed by arguments that proper regulation of the sex industry would help reduce trafficking in women, exploitation of minors and drugs crime. Only the opposition Christian Democrats and three small religious parties came out against the draft law, which now passes to the upper house for rubber stamping. If the reform becomes law, from Jan. 1 next year an estimated 2,000 brothels will be treated exactly the same way as any other business.

### Man gets back highschool ring after 30 years

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Bob Eamigh's world travels include a tour of duty in Vietnam, but his long-lost high school ring has one up on him. After graduating from Altoona High School in 1965, Eamigh shelled out about \$50 for the gold class ring with a deep red stone, the school's insignia and his initials, "RRE." He lost it sometime in 1967 — either somewhere in Penn State University or during training for the Vietnam war. Thirty-one years later, he got a call from Ken DaVico in Hawaii. He found it crusted in coral while snorkelling with a metal detector near the island of Kauai.

### French lottery winner lost it all

PARIS (R) — Somebody in France won a fortune but never claimed it. The national lottery La Francise des Jeux said on Wednesday that nobody had shown up to claim 45 million francs (\$8 million) won by a lottery ticket sold in northern Paris. The mystery provoked a frenzy of media speculation. Explanations varied on whether the winner had lost the ticket, left the country or had a heart attack on seeing the result. The 60-day deadline to claim the prize expired at midnight on Tuesday. A spokeswoman for the lottery said the cash would be returned to the lottery prize pool.

### Scientists launch drive against superstition

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese experts will launch a campaign to raise scientific knowledge and combat superstition after results of a survey showed a resurgence in the popularity of fortune-telling, the official media said Wednesday. A report by the Chinese Association for Science and Technology said "a growing number of people have been resorting to superstitious methods such as fortune-telling when faced with problems in the emerging market economy." Most of those who practice superstitious beliefs were people in rural areas and who were less educated.

Lawyer says Ocalan

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Jordan

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